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NATIONAL REVIEW

DECEMBER 31, 1995 VOL. XLVII, NO. 25

COVER STORY

31 ***Nonsense on Stilts***
Robert Reich has heightened the stature of the Labor Department by disseminating tall tales of American economic injustice, reports **Ramesh Ponnuru.** His theories and policies are justified by stilted rhetoric, but are short on substance.

ARTICLES

16 ***Capital Scene***
The Clintons are getting sucked into the Whitewater vortex, says **John Fund**. . . . **George Tobin** watches the Ethics Committee pester Newt Gingrich. . . . **Kate O'Beirne** looks ahead to next year's congressional agenda.

20 ***On the Scene***
French strikers and government officials are fighting to save French socialism, charges **John Laughland**. . . . **Kenneth Minogue** wonders if a presidency will be the crowning achievement of Australia's insecure intellectuals.

26 ***Wesley's World Revolution***
Evangelical and Pentecostal forms of Protestantism are the fastest-spreading beliefs in the world. Their converts are improving themselves spiritually and materially, explains **David Martin**, which worries some.

34 ***Never Blame the Left***
Why is the Left never called to account for its policies, asks **George Watson**, even when they include genocide?

36 ***Question and Answer***
Richard Lederer discovers that American students almost know the answers to a lot of questions.

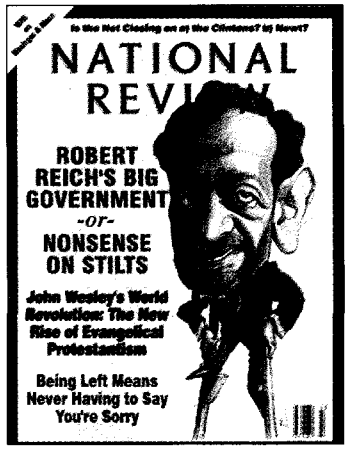
BOOKS, ARTS & MANNERS:

41 After reading Gore Vidal's *Palimpsest: A Memoir*, **Florence King** knows more than she wanted to about Vidal's celebrated alleged friends and famous distant relatives. . . . **Hilton Kramer** checks out of Lewis Lapham's *Hotel America*. . . . **E. Fuller Torrey** thanks Richard Webster for explaining *Why Freud Was Wrong*. . . . Marvin Olasky, non-historian author of *Fighting for Freedom and Virtue*, understands the American Revolution better than most historians, says **Richard Brookhiser**. . . . Salman Rushdie wrote *The Moor's Last Sigh* to prove he could do it. That's not a good enough reason, sighs **James Bowman**. . . . **John Simon** catches up on the season's best films, and its worst. . . . The centenary of Manhattan's Church of St. Mary the Virgin didn't get as much attention as the centenary of the New York Public Library. Still, says **Linda Bridges**, Hail Mary!

56 ***The Gimlet Eye***
Joe Bob Briggs refuses to deefuse, even for a Barbie dream house.

SECTIONS

2 ***Letters***
4 ***From the Editor***
6 ***For the Record***
8 ***The Week***
23 ***Gekko***
24 hel
40 ***Letter from Al***
50 ***Books in Brief***
53 ***Trans-O-Gram***
54 ***On the Right***



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LETTERS

Of Free Trade and Loyalty

Ramesh Ponnuru's "Fair Trade, Foul Politics" [Nov. 6] omits some important points emphasized by Sir James Goldsmith in *The Trap* and in his *Response* to objections to the first book. E.g., while devotion to global free trade led the French economy to grow an amazing 80 per cent in the past two decades, it also increased unemployment from about 400,000 to over 5 million. A comparable development in the United States would translate into some 22 million unemployed. Because of our inferior educational system, the number would probably be even higher.

Mr. Ponnuru believes that Buchanan's suggested tariffs on Japanese goods would shrink U.S. purchases, not raise money. Are we going to buy American television sets? Global free trade has devastated U.S. industries from VCRs to eyeglass frames. Alan Tonelson has shown how protectionist treaties negotiated under President Reagan saved the automobile, machine-tool, and computer-chip industries. It is not just working-class jobs that are being lost. The *New York Times* (Aug. 28) reported that well-paid and prestigious computer jobs are flowing from this country into India. Loyal Americans do not want to see that happen, do they, Mr. Ponnuru?

E. Christian Kopff
University of Colorado
Boulder, Colo.

Sir James Goldsmith's assertion about French unemployment is not backed by evidence or logic. In France, trade is a scapegoat for problems caused by an over-regulated labor market and an over-generous welfare state. Studies by respected economists like Jagdish Bhagwati and Marvin Kosters conclude that trade has not been a major factor in unemployment in the developed world. Without question, tariffs can help individual industries in the short term. For other industries, the same tariffs raise prices and cause supply shortages. Semiconductor protectionism destroyed more jobs in the computer industry than it protected elsewhere. Mr. Kopff is concerned about overseas investment by American-owned companies, many of them expanding here. Even if his fears were well-grounded, it's hard to see what tariffs would accomplish, particularly in an industry where much of the work can be done by fax and modem. Mr. Kopff would have America declare war on its own livelihood. If I didn't know better or had worse manners, I'd question his loyalty. —RP

Editor's note: Letters of 200 words or fewer have a greater chance of being published.

Immigration Facts

It's not surprising that your unsigned attack ["The Week," Dec. 11] on my November editorial quotes very selectively, dropping both the context and the qualifiers. Contrary to your assertion that I "got [my] facts wrong," I went to considerable lengths to check the facts of pre-1965 policies. As I wrote in *Reason*, there were no numerical quotas on immigration from the Western Hemisphere before 1965, although there were a head tax, a literacy test, a health exam, and a requirement that the immigrant not be likely to become a public charge. Interpretation of this final requirement varied with the particular border-crossing officials and economic conditions.

The point is that prior to 1965, immigration policy discriminated *in favor of* the very ethnic groups whose presence NATIONAL REVIEW blames on the 1965 act. This is not surprising when you think of it: The 1965 law skewed policy toward family reunification. If there hadn't been large numbers of Mexicans here already, it would have been impossible for large numbers of Mexicans to immigrate legally after 1965. Yet many have.

The social engineers who designed immigration policy in the 1920s were afraid of the Irish, Italians, Poles, Jews, and Asians—not Latin Americans. Today's would-be social engineers simply prefer a different mix, or no immigrants at all. But both seek to centrally plan the correct ethnic makeup of the country, with all the bureaucracy and coercion that will inevitably entail for all Americans, and both treat immigrants as members of groups rather than as individuals, a major point of my editorial.

The 1965 act indeed has problems; most prominently, it unjustly discriminates against people who happen not to be born into the right family (and against the Americans who might like to employ them). But its critics are not advocating a more neutral standard, such as the auction system proposed by Gary Becker, the first-come-first-served system proposed by Peter Salins, or a lottery along the lines of that currently used for "diversity visas." Nor, as we can see from Alan Simpson's immigration bill, can immigration critics continue to hide behind George Borjas's arguments about skills: immigration "reform" means not letting in immigrants *even if they are highly skilled professionals*. None of the immigration-reform measures either before Congress or advocated by anti-immigration lobbyists are less interventionist than current policy; they are simply more restrictionist. To pretend otherwise is profoundly dishonest.

Anyone who would like to read my actual editorial, rather than carefully selected snatches, can call *Reason* at 310-391-2245 and ask for a copy. Oh, and speaking of fact-checking, it's *Mrs.* Postrel.

Virginia I. Postrel
Los Angeles, Calif.

Please see the editorial on this subject in this issue's "The Week." —ED.

Restrict All Lobbyists?

I read with much interest Rich Lowry's "Emptying the Well" [Nov. 27]. If the principle behind Istook–McIntosh is that recipients of federal grants should be restricted in their lobbying efforts, why confine the principle to federal grants? At the bottom line of the federal budget a dollar is a dollar, whether from a grant, a subsidy, or a tax credit. If a small non-profit organization is to be restricted in lobbying because it happens to receive a federal grant for another specific purpose, why shouldn't tobacco growers be restricted in lobbying since they are the direct beneficiaries of government subsidies? Why shouldn't Archer Daniels Midland be limited in lobbying since it is on the government dole (pun intended)? Why shouldn't mining companies be restricted in lobbying when they can purchase federal land for pennies and then pay no royalties on production? Why should we not limit a corporation in lobbying if it is the recipient of a tax credit?

John H. Merriman Jr.
Cortland, N.Y.

Because some of them are so ideological, federal grantees were the target of opportunity this year. It may indeed be worth thinking about extending the principle more generally. —RL

Adult Content

Kudos to Florence King ["The Misanthrope's Corner," Dec. 11] for saying what many believe but have been afraid to say: Grown-ups are people too!

Ann-Marie Stetson
Portland, Ore.

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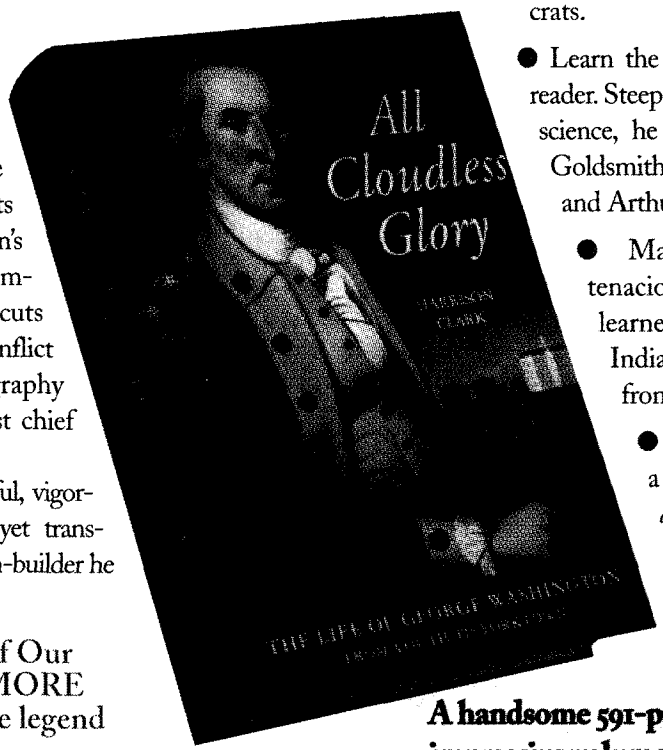

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FROM THE EDITOR

Scrooged!

■ I wrote too soon when I declared last time that we had had a "somewhat disappointing" set of entries for our competition on threats to the Christmas spirit. No sooner had the column been irrevocably printed than letters cascaded in—each one reporting a dafter absurdity than the last. Thus:

Brian Ward of West Orange, N.J., was reprimanded by a high-school dean for singing "God rest ye merry, gentlemen," in the school precincts. Not for singing off-key; that is doubtless protected under the Americans with Disabilities Act. No. His choice of song allegedly degraded the religions of those New Jerseyans who don't have a holiday during the Christmas season (and so suffer discrimination in the tidings of comfort and joy department).

No chances of *that* were taken by the Los Angeles Unified School District, which, as part of its "Winter Program," re-wrote "My Favorite Things" as a gastro-multicultural hymn to Diversity:

Cupcakes and cookies and candy,
knishes,
Latkas and bagels and cream cheese on dishes,
Hot dogs and turkey and cranberry rings—
These are a few of my favorite things.

Pizza, fried chicken, and tacos in boxes
Ice cream and sodas, etc., etc.

My thanks to Julio Vera, and I hope his daughter soon recovers from her preemptive nausea.

(My colleague Chris Weinkopf remembers a similar nonsense at Tufts, where Secret Santas became Secret Snowmen since, as the residential advisor put it, "we're not all Christians." Santa Claus is, of course, only remotely a Christian figure, being St. Nicholas at several commercial removes. His sacrifice at the altar of secularism is presumably guilt by association. Will Bugs Bunny be allowed out over Easter?)

Most entries show attempts to write Christmas out of the calendar altogether. According to Greg Zerzan, the public-school calendar in Portland, Ore., lists various December holidays—Kwanzaa of course, Hannukah, the Winter Solstice. But Christmas is literally a non-event.

More subtly, reports Jon Stapel, the city of Pittsburgh has officially named Christmas "the Sparkle Season."

Often, Christmas symbols were either outlawed or misappropriated for secular purposes. In New York, for instance, the sensitive Metro-North authorities at Grand Central station put up a Christmas tree counterbalanced with a menorah instead of a nativity scene. But this was not nearly multicultural enough. A Muslim group demanded equal time, and both decorations were removed.

It was worse in Richmond, Va., thanks to the Advocates for Intercultural Richmond subcommittee of the Human Relations Commission. In order not to offend local Muslims and Koreans (according to a local paper submitted by David Adams), the mayor will inclusively switch on a "Unity Tree"—a large fir with lights and decorations (such, we may presume, as Muslims and Koreans traditionally celebrate around at this time of year).

And from New Jersey (again), Ann Landell relays the results of a school competition. Teams had to write down as many "Christmas characters" as possible in the time available. Her son's team quickly scribbled down Jesus, Mary, Joseph, the three wise men, etc. To no avail: these were not considered Christmas characters. The teacher awarded points only for Frosty the Snowman, Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer, etc.

And once upon a time, the Soviet authorities invented jolly old "Father Frost" to bring presents to children at New Year, in place of the subversively religious St. Nicholas. How long before Father Frost, exiled from Moscow, seeks asylum from the multicultural Bolsheviks of sparkling Pittsburgh?

Mrs. Landell gets the bubbly. And a heartfelt "God rest ye" to the Advocates for Intercultural Richmond subcommittee of the Human Relations Commission.

—JOHN O'SULLIVAN

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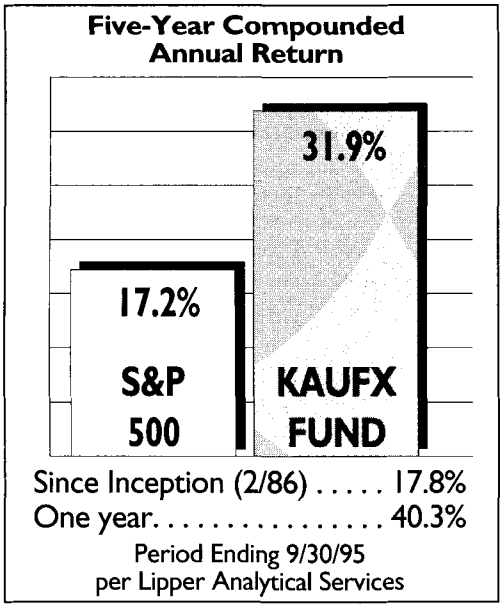

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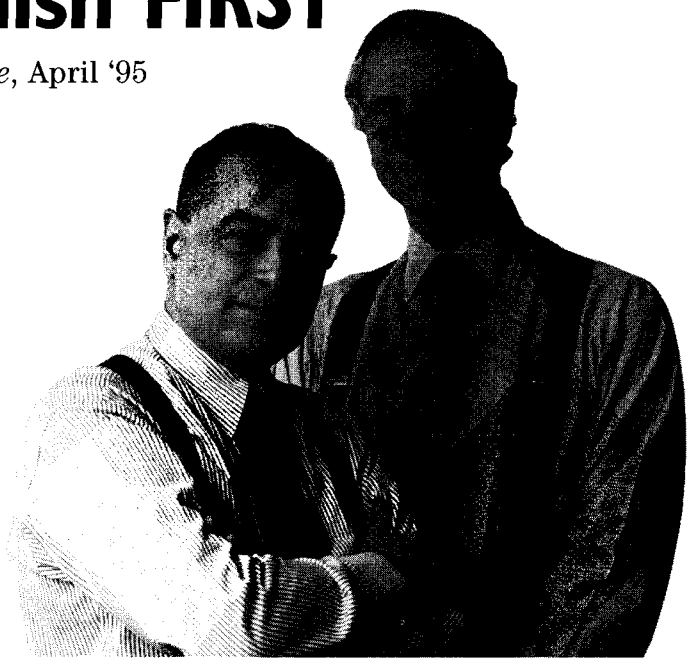

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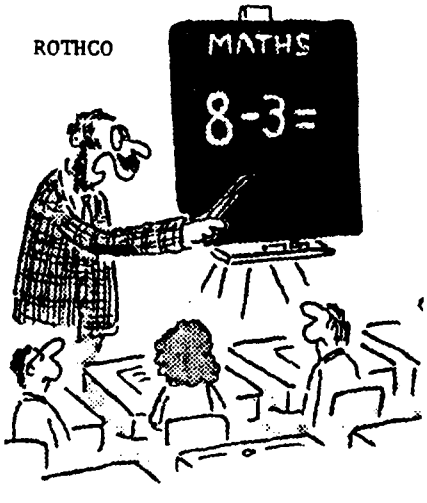
FOR THE RECORD

■ Ethics questions take center stage as House Ethics Committee dismisses most charges against **Newt Gingrich**, commits tax question to special counsel. Gingrich noted that committee Democrats joined Republicans in voting to clear him of most charges, likens remaining issues to jaywalking. The probe is likely to take months. Says (finally retiring) Rep. **Pat Schroeder** (D., Colo.), "When the special counsel comes back and asks for expanded powers, the Republicans are going to look very terrible if they put their wagons in a circle and protect the Speaker." While **Lamar Alexander** and **Jack Kemp** defend the Speaker, Rep. **Peter King** (R., N.Y.) says, "He has to realize he's not the Republican Party and he's not the Republican revolution. He can't be trying to dominate all the debate and all the media." . . . Whitewater rapids get rockier for **Bill Clinton**. White House spokesman **Mark Fabiani** says Sen. **Alfonse D'Amato** (R., N.Y.) "is not searching for the truth. Instead he is engaging in a politically inspired fishing expedition." . . . In *Arkansas Democrat–Gazette* interview, Clinton says the state has done pretty well from his Presidency, adds, "But I regret all the other things that have happened. Although maybe it's caused a lot more money to be spent in the state."

■ At opening of N.H. Clinton–**Gore** HQ, **James Carville** says Clinton will win "by portraying himself as a candidate working for a better future while the Republican Party is selfishly concerned with the present" (*Boston Globe*). **Hillary Rodham Clinton**, filing husband's primary papers, uses housewifely imagery: "We can get our economic house in order without sweeping compassion out the door." . . . States are bickering over primary and caucus schedule. In Delaware, officials are planning primary just four days after first-in-the-nation New Hampshire; Louisiana wants to move ahead of Iowa's caucuses. Most candidates are heeding calls to boycott the leapfroggers. **Phil Gramm**, facing criticism for participating in both states (where he is expected to do well), responds: "If you can't take a little heat on an issue like this, how are you going to deal with the Russians, much less deal with the Democrats? . . . I think somebody who gets so caught up in pandering that they can't stand up to pressure like this, they probably ought not to be President." . . . **Mike Wild**, **Steve Forbes**'s Iowa coordinator, promises Forbes "is not going to capitulate to the right wing" on abortion. Iowa poll shows Forbes draws heavily from Gramm camp. **Pat Buchanan** attacks Forbes's flat tax for cutting revenues by $40 billion: "I don't believe in this conservatism that's really another form of social Darwinism, one that takes no account of people's sacrifices and obligations." Keeping up the attack, he says, "What is the true conservatism? Is it preserving a thousand family farms in Iowa? Or is it collecting all the hogs into one conglomerate, killing a thousand family farms, because it's a little more efficient?" Forbes retorts that Buchanan is "reflecting traditional cultural thinking in Washington." . . . **Richard Lugar** goes negative, slamming Gramm and Buchanan for "negative campaigning, character assassination, and mean-spirited politics." Lamar Alexander joins in, blasting Gramm and **Bob Dole** for "mean-spiritedness." Alexander also complains about spotty media coverage: "We've had 90 per cent of the presidential race and nobody knows about it."



"Write a story on how the number 8 feels about having 3 subtracted from it."

■ National Rifle Association calls 1995 "the best year in twenty years": Ore., Pa., and Ga. replace waiting periods with instant checks, and ten states pass right-to-carry laws. . . . GrassRoots Research, new polling firm focusing on issues, finds 38 per cent of workers would withdraw from Social Security if they could, even without getting back taxes they have paid in. . . . Rep. **Robert Torricelli** (D., N.J.) kicks off Senate race at a grade school, but Associated Press reports that students "became distracted when one of them threw up during the speech."

■ UN nuclear official **Hans Blix** says North Korea is reneging on promises to permit inspection, part of a deal for aid from U.S., South Korea, Japan. South Korean Pres. **Kim Young Sam** warns that North's rapid deterioration could bring famine this winter and destabilize peninsula. . . . Finance Minister **Ivan Kocarnik** has introduced Czechs' fourth straight balanced budget since split from Slovakia in '93. Monetarist Prime Minister **Vaclav Klaus** calls it "alpha and omega" of his campaign next year. . . . Japan's government says economy will expand by 1 per cent by end of fiscal year (March '96), far below original prediction of 2.8 per cent. Most observers, however, see four-year recession ending. . . . South African crime wave, up 75 per cent in last year, has reached Houghton, rich suburb where President **Nelson Mandela** lives. . . . *Financial Times* says **Stuart Eizenstat**—domestic-policy chief for **Jimmy Carter** and currently U.S. ambassador to European Union, who has "an almost touching faith in the inevitability of European integration"—will return to Washington as undersecretary of Commerce, possibly replacing **Ron Brown** next year. . . . **Godzilla**, 45-year-old Japanese movie monster, finally calls it quits after 22 films and 86 million tickets.

■ Media Research Center's "Dumbest Quote of the Year" award goes to NPR's **Nina Totenberg** for her comment about **Jesse Helms**'s push to reallocate medical-research spending: "I think he ought to be worried about what's going on in the good Lord's mind, because if there is retributive justice, he'll get AIDS from a transfusion, or one of his grandchildren will get it."

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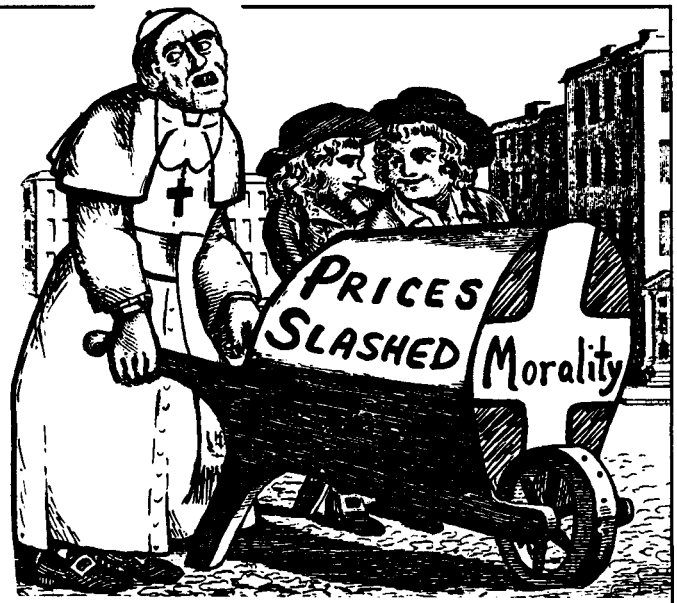
Should the Pope Offer Discounts?



Catholicism says we're sinners and need to confess our sins to Christ, who is rich in mercy. But modernist Catholics say it's too "painful" to think about sin, and since people don't like to feel guilty, we should "ease up on the rules" — lower the standards. Thus mod Catholics want the Church to essentially forget her teachings on abortion, euthanasia, homosexuality, premarital sex, the indissolubility of marriage, birth control, and the like.

Over a half-century ago, H. Richard Niebuhr summarized the credo of such a discount Christianity this way: "A God without wrath brought men without sin into a kingdom without judgment through the ministrations of a Christ without a cross." Today this is basically the message of liberal Protestantism. But God will not be mocked, and liberal Protestantism is dying.

According to market economics, if you want more buyers, lower the price. But it doesn't work that way in the economy of grace. Liberal Catholics would give us cheap grace, which, said Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "means the justification of sin" and is merely "the grace we bestow on ourselves." Yes, this is appealing, but only superficially so. The trendy trinkets of cheap grace don't actually satisfy the human heart. The People of God want the Pearl of Great Price. Which is why orthodox religious orders, such as Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity, are growing but the flaky, liberated ones are dying, and why the dissenting Church in Holland is moribund but the loyalist Church in Africa is booming.

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THE WEEK

■ Jack Kemp explains that liberal Congressman Tom Campbell (R., Calif.) represents "what Colin Powell calls the Lincoln wing of the Republican Party." Make that the Lincoln Continental wing, Jack.

■ Yes, the House Ethics Committee essentially cleared Newt Gingrich on all but one of the sixty counts of ethics complaints against him. It's also true that the one outstanding question—whether tax-exempt foundations violated their tax status by donating to his college course—involves an eye-glazing technicality. But Republicans are fooling themselves if they think any of this matters. The Speaker suffered a grievous blow when the Ethics Committee agreed to appoint an outside counsel to investigate that last count. Ethics Committee Chairman Nancy Johnson (R., Conn.) apparently didn't realize it, but *any* other result would have been preferable. In an outside counsel, Democrats get what they've always wanted, a gung-ho investigator who will push to expand his inquiry until he finds the one violation that provides the leverage for forcing Gingrich from office. In this overtly political fight, Republicans must start punching back. First, they should insist that the outside counsel be a tax lawyer rather than a prosecutor willing to become a Grand Inquisitor. Next, the GOP needs to defend the Speaker more generally. Republicans were encouraged when the exquisitely moderate Tom Campbell trounced an anti-Newt candidate in a December 12 special election. But GOP freshmen won't have Campbell's luxury of distancing themselves from the Speaker. Their reputations depend, at least partly, on resisting the Democrats' effort to decapitate the new majority through the sheer force of negative press and ethics smears. This time it's the counter-revolution that mans the guillotine. Republicans must blunt its blade.

■ After speaking non-stop for five hours at a news conference, Rep. Enid Waldholtz (R., Utah) faces a little-known federal charge: impersonating the President.

■ Rep. Ron Wyden won the Democratic nomination to run for Sen. Bob Packwood's seat in Oregon's special election, but the eight-term House veteran hasn't recovered from the humiliation of scoring 0 for 7 in a local TV station's pop quiz. Wyden couldn't find Bosnia on a globe; didn't know the price of a loaf of bread, a gallon of gas, or a gallon of milk; couldn't give the unemployment rate or largest employer in Oregon; and couldn't name Canada's prime minister. Mail-in balloting begins on January 10, and a recent poll has Republican State Sen. Gordon Smith (quiz score: 5 for 7) ahead by 5 points. Poor Wyden—he was probably looking for Bosnia at the heart of Europe.

■ Move over, Engler and Weld; George Pataki has joined the club. In his latest budget New York's governor calls for a 25 per cent cut in welfare benefits, a six-month eligibility limit for able-bodied beneficiaries, and a reduction of $1 billion in the state's gold-plated Medicaid program. For the first time in over fifty years spending financed by state and local sources will decline—if George Pataki has his way. To be sure, his program is unlikely to survive intact, and even if it did, would still leave New York with the highest per-capita state and local spending in the nation. The governor's conservatism is less an epiphany than atonement for mistakes made in his freshman year, when the largest tax cut in state history was offset by a wide array of gimmicks, most of which merely pushed costs into future years. Time may be on Pataki's side, however. After lagging the nation throughout the Cuomo years, New York State added 90,000 new jobs in the last year, catapulting from 50th to 4th in private-sector job creation. Replacing nanny with a job seems like a far more practical proposition today—even in the nation's premier nanny state.

■ Hollywood will make another movie about *Grumpy Old Men* as soon as they finish the GOP primaries.

■ For all the attention the Western media have paid, the world-wide evangelical Protestant revolution, described in this issue by the distinguished sociologist

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David Martin, might not be happening at all. Yet as revolutions go, it seems likely to prove of at least equal significance to Islamic fundamentalism and more lasting than Marxism. Other Christians, especially Catholics, will be of two minds about its religious impact since its general tendency is to turn bad Catholics into good Protestants. Even so, its effect on the Roman Catholic and other mainline churches may be ultimately benign. As Professor Martin points out, it provides them with a sharp incentive to reform religious beliefs and practices that have become infected by either a tepid secularism or leftist politics. For the paradox of evangelical Christianity is that by stressing holiness and personal salvation above the "social gospel," it turns this world upside down. It releases people from ancient forms of bondage, both practical and psychological, *into* hard work, self-reliance, responsibility, love of family, and equality before God. These virtues, preached pre-eminently by John Wesley, redeemed the British working class from the moral squalor of the early Industrial Revolution and, translated to politics, fueled the American Revolution (ruefully described by George III as a revolution of Presbyterians). On the wings of the English language, they are now spreading to every continent. The Western media will notice eventually—watch for headlines like: "The Religious Right Goes Global."

■ David Rieff writes in *The New Yorker* that President Clinton "has probably never before made a decision so fraught with political peril" as to deploy troops in Bosnia. "The stakes are enormous—for the peace of Europe and, if American soldiers start coming home dead, for his own re-election hopes." For the soldiers too.

■ The great regulatory push to ban smoking in bars, airplanes, restaurants, and workplaces is based on studies that purport to show that non-smokers breathing in smokers' smoke are at risk. The most important study came from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, which went so far as to claim that three thousand Americans were dying each year from exposure to secondhand tobacco smoke. The 1993 EPA report was subject to widespread criticism by statisticians and epidemiologists, and now the Congressional Research Service has called it junk science: "the results are not definitive . . . even at the greatest exposure levels the measured risks are still subject to uncertainty . . . very few or even no deaths can be attributed to ETS (environmental tobacco smoke) . . ." Senator Wendell Ford (D., Ky.) called on federal agencies to reconsider the blanket ban on smoking in public and semi-public places. Fat chance! The PC bureaucrats' rule is: Never let science get in the way of a good regulation.

■ Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary knows how to travel in style. On a week-long trip to South Africa, she flew in a luxury jet used by Madonna and brought along one hundred people. She has also taken expensive trips, courtesy of the taxpayers, to India, China, and Pakistan. Al Gore came to her defense: "On these trips, she has created thousands of American jobs and billions of dollars in contracts for companies in this country." And that's just counting her entourage.

■ From the German magazine *Der Spiegel*: "Gunther Burpus remained wedged in his front-door cat flap for two days because passersby thought he was a piece of installation art. Mr. Burpus, 41, of Bremen, was using the flap because he had mislaid his keys. Unfortunately, he was spotted by a group of student pranksters who removed his trousers, painted his bottom bright blue, stuck a daffodil between his buttocks, and erected a sign saying: 'Germany Resurgent. An Essay in Street Art. Please Give Generously.' Passersby assumed Mr. Burpus's screams were part of the act, and it was only when an old woman complained to the police that he was finally freed. 'I kept calling for help,' he said, 'but people just said, "Very good, very clever!" and threw coins at me.' "

■ Madonna threatens to take out ads in the *Village Voice* to find a suitable father for the child she wants to have. Let us make it perfectly clear: Madonna's ad will *not* be run in *NR*'s classified section.

Hillary's File

Where's the pea? Beneath which shell?
Foster knew, but I can't tell.
Nussbaum moved the pea around.
Hubbell stashed it underground.
With three shells to hide the pea,
It's remained a mystery,
Though I think one can assume
Al will stir-fry this legume.

—W. H. von Dreele

High Noon, High Stakes

FOR months, Republicans have been both winning and losing the fight over the balanced budget. President Clinton has consistently come the GOP's way on the need to balance the budget in seven years. But at the same time the GOP has been clobbered in the court of public opinion. On a wide range of issues—chiefly Medicare, education, and environmental spending—President Clinton has portrayed the GOP's savings as the excesses of conservative extrem-

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ists. So he has been able to straddle the cognitive divide in the American public mind, endorsing a balanced budget as a goal but rejecting the specific measures necessary to get there.

For the GOP to win the budget fight, President Clinton must be made to choose. This is why the GOP should be willing to endure some short-term political pain during a second government shutdown—which continues as we go to press—to redeem its biggest promise of 1994.

How far should Republicans be willing to go to get a deal? We urge flexibility on the spending numbers (which the GOP is already displaying). No one knows, even under the Congressional Budget Office assumptions, whether the GOP plan will actually achieve balance by 2002. There are too many variables—recessions, sudden expenditures like the S&L bailout in the 1980s—to predict with precision. Only on the $245 billion for tax cuts should there be intransigence, because that represents dollars handed back to taxpayers.

The balanced budget is more important as symbolism than as accounting. What matters now is that the government be clearly put on a path of reduced improvidence. On Medicare Republicans should be more willing to spend another $70 billion over seven years than to abandon medical savings accounts, which represent a radical departure from the Great Society model of government. The same applies to Medicaid. Republicans can give on the numbers, but they must resist White House demands to preserve the program's entitlement status, which ensures it will remain an endless drain on state coffers. Ditto welfare. Ending the entitlement status of Aid to Families with Dependent Children may be the most fundamental welfare reform they are proposing. These are measures on which the GOP cannot compromise. Their most important accomplishment this year is not potentially balancing the budget—an elusive goal still nearly a decade away—but scrapping huge chunks of the federal entitlement state.

Republicans have stopped talking about the positive aspects of their program because they are so preoccupied with the essentially defensive message of "reducing the rate of growth" of government programs. Balancing the budget is consuming every issue that comes near it. Take welfare reform. President Clinton is likely to veto the first—already weak—welfare bill Republicans send him. The GOP should welcome the prospect and take the issue to the voters in 1996. Instead, they may weaken the welfare bill still further to get a Clinton signature—because they need the $80 billion of savings to make their figures add up.

Now, of course, reducing the deficit is important. So is getting the President to give Republicans inoculation on Medicare by signing some version of their reform plan. But the Republicans can't jettison the substance of their agenda to get a deal. If the Do-Nothing President won't sign, so be it. The GOP will have a tough year-long fight on Medicare; but even in the mainstream press lately there has been an increasing recognition that the Democrats are blowing smoke in their Mediscare campaign. Republicans have a year to recoup. And Mr. Clinton will be vulnerable on a slew of issues, from the deficit to welfare reform to the size of the Federal Government. He will finally have made a large-stakes gamble, placing all his chips on the traditional liberal wing of his party. Good luck.

Abortion's New Standard

A PRIMER on logic and politics. Pick out the fallacies in this list of propositions: a) It is "wrong" for parents to torture their infants; therefore let us have tax incentives to encourage them to stop. b) Infanticide is "wrong," but let us uphold a neutral law so that parents can reach decisions according to their own consciences. c) Abortion is "wrong, and we plan to reduce it through aggressive, though voluntary and non-coercive, means."

The three propositions are of a piece. The first two reveal their moral vacuity at once. The third has been offered, with a straight face, in the most recent issue of *The Weekly Standard*, by Noemie Emery. Her article is part of a continuing effort to revise the Republican platform, which since 1980 has included a Human Life Amendment. Last year conservatives William Kristol and George Weigel suggested in *NR* that pro-lifers focus on more readily achievable objectives such as parental-consent laws or bans on third-trimester abortions. Pro-lifers could debate the prudence of this position within the context of shared objectives: a reduction in the number of abortions and legal recognition of the practice's injustice. Miss Emery, however, has disavowed anti-abortion laws as a goal—and William Bennett has elsewhere made a less stark argument for concentrating on moral suasion rather than law.

Miss Emery at least forthrightly acknowledges that she would make the GOP a pro-choice party. But both she and Mr. Bennett would have conservatives strike a moral posture on abortion while avoiding uses of the law that might interfere with liberties many people have come to regard as important. Morality is converted then into high-sounding sentiments, but sentiments never quite taken seriously enough to find expression in the law.

No one, however, would brand the torture of infants as "wrong," and then hold back from forbidding it. Miss Emery and Mr. Bennett would reach a different judgment on abortion, and the reason is plain to everyone but them: they evidently do not regard abortion as "wrong" in the same sense that infanticide is wrong. (Miss Emery remarks tellingly that the fetus "is life but barely.") If they thought that real people were killed in these surgeries, they would be much more determined to restrain them.

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What they offer, then, is a morality that conveniently avoids the sting of reproach; a morality without political cost, without bite, without edge, because it is finally without seriousness or substance.

Pro-lifers, on the other hand, have long ago absorbed the prudent judgment of Thomas Aquinas: that the purpose of the law is to lead people to virtue, not suddenly but gradually. Most pro-lifers are willing to begin with modest legal steps in the restriction of abortion—including the commitment simply to preserve the life of any child who survives an abortion. Where is a comparable modesty or prudence on the other side? Where is the willingness, on the part of Senators Kennedy and Specter, to accept restraints even on a handful of abortions, such as the grisly "partial birth" abortions? The fact of the matter is that Noemie Emery and William Bennett have no audience on the pro-choice side. The pro-choicers will not concede even the slightest restriction on abortion, because any restriction implies its wrongness.

The real effect, then, of the teaching offered by Miss Emery and Mr. Bennett is to detach themselves and other conservatives from any genuine conviction about the grave wrongness of abortion. Republicans who heed them would merely undertake to redeem President Clinton's broken campaign promise to make abortion "safe, legal, and rare."

Not a Social Club

HOWEVER they voted on the issue of troops in Bosnia, congressional Republicans agreed on the core American interest in Europe—namely, preservation of the Atlantic Alliance. Those who supported the deployment argued that NATO's cohesion and credibility depended on it; many of those who voted against it echoed *NR*'s view that NATO would only be damaged by requiring it to uphold an unstable and unjust ceasefire and generally thrusting it into the global humanitarian "social work" for which it was never designed. In other words, there were good non-isolationist reasons for voting no. In two years' time, the goals of intervention will not have been achieved, and the friends of Bosnia and NATO who gave it their conditional support will be regretting their naïveté.

Still, NATO had been called into the breach because it is the only serious security organization in Europe. The European Union tried to mediate in Bosnia and failed utterly; ditto the United Nations. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the pan-European grouping once thought useful for conflict resolution, proved irrelevant. NATO's indispensability was underlined by France's decision in early December to rejoin most of its military planning structures. This is a dramatic reconciliation after a thirty-year breach. (The U.S. will need to keep an eye on the French, though, since one of their aims is to wreak from inside the broader changes in NATO's structure they couldn't achieve from outside.)

The Clinton Administration could take credit for these developments, were it not for its own muddled thinking on the matter. In a July 1994 presidential strategy document, the Clintonites declared that NATO's mission in the post–Cold War era was "evolving," to include new tasks such as "manag[ing] ethnic and national conflict in Europe," and promoting the strategy of "European integration" embracing the former Communist states of the East, including Russia. The first of these new tasks is at best the kind of international "social work" that Sen. Gramm warned against in the Bosnia debate, at worst an attempt to create a Holy Alliance for liberals. The second high-

The Week in Verse

So what if to the first it wasn't equal?
You take what you can get when it's a sequel.
Bereft, this time, the thrill of its debut,
The shock, the scandal; here came *Shutdown II*
In time for *Christmas*, so it was a cinch
The press would blame that wicked old *Gingrich*.
And polls said voters too were in ferment
(Though *Campbell* won by 23 per cent).
Bill, who'd reneged on matters rather boring—
The sev'n year deadline and congressional scoring—
Expected, thus, to garner much applause
For looking on while *Newt* mugged *Santa Claus*.
His tears, perhaps, were somewhat crocodilian
As he regretted those few hundred billion
Whose absence from the budget meant the poor,
The old, the sick, the lib'ral would no more
Have money, health, or dignity and then
Just disappear—without his veto pen.
This last (he said) he got from *LBJ*,
Who signed with it the Medicare *In re*
Long, long before they knew just what we'd have to pay.

But *Clinton* also might have been the keener
To start a fight because of the subpoena
D'Amato issued for *Whitewater* notes,
Which he rejected (being short of votes),
Asserting with a sharp uncivil edge
Exec–attorney–client privilege.
A *Budget* fight might cause dissatisfaction,
But at the least it was a great distraction.
Likewise, there was not much that could embarrass
In signing up for *Bosnian* peace in *Paris*.
There was in all this Christmas-time to-do
A sense, however slight, of *déjà-vu*:
How strange then that at *Yuletide* there was shown
The life of *Nixon* as new-made by *Stone*.
His lapidary frames refer them to the throne.

—JUVENAL

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lights the Administration's naïveté about Russia and its resistance to bringing the Central European democracies rapidly into the Alliance.

The Administration vehemently denied Peter Rodman's important scoop in our last issue (*NR*, Dec. 25, p. 23) that Mr. Clinton had assured Boris Yeltsin that if Russia cooperated in Bosnia, NATO enlargement would not happen any time soon. Whereupon the NATO foreign ministers meeting in Brussels put off any further decisions on enlargement for at least another year, and the Russian government, through Foreign Ministry spokesman Mikhail Demurin, breezily took credit for engineering the "pause" in NATO enlargement. Not a very credible denial, as denials go. *NR* stands by its story—and by the view that the larger Clinton policy of turning NATO into an everyone-is-welcome social club like the OSCE would ruin it.

The Fire This Time

AN ODIOUS racial crime in New York City illuminates the pathology of racial politicking nationwide.

For some months, a clothing store on 125th Street, Harlem's main commercial strip, had been embroiled in a real-estate dispute with a record store, which was its subtenant. Fred Harari, the owner of the clothing store, was Jewish; Shikulu Shange, the owner of the record store, was black. As the dispute dragged on, Mr. Shange summoned to his aid a floating population of street vendors and agitators to picket Mr. Harari's store. On the morning of December 8, one of the demonstrators burst into the store, shot and wounded several customers and employees, and set the building on fire. He and seven innocent people died in the blaze.

Police comments on day one suggested that the crime was the act of a lone madman. But it soon became known that the arsonist, one Roland Smith, had both a criminal record and a history of black racialist sentiment. His fellow demonstrators had been taped railing against Jews and "crackers"; Mr. Harari had charged, in a civil suit filed before the fire, that they had also threatened to burn him out.

The most conspicuous figure caught in the rhetorical pogrom was the Rev. Al Sharpton, who had attended one demonstration. Sharpton first came to prominence by endorsing Tawana Brawley, a young black hoaxstress who claimed to have been raped by whites. After that brouhaha faded, he began to go mainstream. He adopted Jesse Jackson as his political guru, and competed in the 1992 New York Democratic senatorial primary, finishing a respectable third. Now the repressed has returned. No more Senate campaigns for this clergyman.

But why is anyone surprised? For thirty years, blacks have been encouraged to blame their troubles on whites, and to demand redress in corporate terms. Phenomena as different as affirmative action and the Million Man March are simply larger versions of the Harlem story, minus matches. This has been bad for everybody, infantilizing blacks and disabling whites with either rage or guilt.

Several black politicians, notably the liberal Democrat Charles Rangel (who represents Harlem in Congress), have condemned both the crime and the language of the boycott. But the black political class faces a long course of intellectual and rhetorical remedial therapy.

No, Virginia

VIRGINIA Postrel, editor of *Reason*, is understandably distressed in her letter to the editor (see page 2 of this issue) that we misstated her marital status in our editorial about her maiden excursion into the history of U.S. immigration policy (December 11). We apologize to Mrs. Postrel. And congratulate Mr. Postrel.

More significantly, however, Mrs. Postrel's letter marks a momentous development: the beginning of the collapse of the libertarian establishment's dogmatic hear-no-evil, see-no-evil, speak-no-sense position on immigration. As far as we know, her admission that "the 1965 act has indeed had problems" is a first for that establishment. (By contrast, Professor Julian Simon, in yet another Cato Institute report, has just given what can only be called a simon-pure reiteration of the dogma.) But the main problem Mrs. Postrel instances—the misnamed "family reunification" preference—is in fact the core of the 1965 system. So she now inexorably will be forced to admit what NATIONAL REVIEW has been saying for years: U.S. immigration policy is broke and needs fixing.

Mrs. Postrel also complains about selective quota-

Clinton's Peaceable Kingdom

We'll separate the parties
Till they're a mile apart.
We'll tip-toe through the minefields,
Though no one's got a chart.
We'll charm the girls with chocolates
And wow the kids with gum
As Serbs salaam with mullahs
While Croats sway and hum.

—W. H. VON DREELE

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tion. But tellingly she did not object to the *Wall Street Journal*'s quotation from her column, which *NR* clearly cited. And she implicitly concedes the point of our editorial: she was flat-out wrong to claim that the Mexican border was "essentially open" after the restrictive legislation of the 1920s; she had failed to understand the impact of the other criteria that were applied besides numerical limits. She is still wrong to suggest that a large pre-1965 Mexican inflow made inevitable the stupendous Mexican inflow after 1965. As *NR* noted, there *was* no large early Mexican inflow. Legal Mexican immigration in the entire decade of the 1950s was only 299,000, close to the number that now enter every year. Because Mrs. Postrel is unaware of what critics of immigration policy have actually been saying, she makes these mistakes, while also lumping together and demonizing their varied reform proposals.

We must point out to her, though, that a policy which allows more immigrants in, against the will of the American people, is obviously more interventionist than one that allows fewer immigrants in. This is not "profound dishonesty" but logic.

To repeat, now that we have her attention: *NR* favors a national rethinking of immigration. While all the arguments are being considered, the current crisis would benefit from an immigration moratorium.

Mrs. Postrel seems to feel cruelly ill-used. Is this the same Virginia Postrel who suggested in the December *Reason* that because *NR*'s extract from Dinesh D'Souza's *The End of Racism* included his observation that "group traits have an empirical basis in shared experience," this meant that "William F. Buckley's once-revered magazine now blithely insinuates . . . that Jews are not only tight with a dollar *but conspiring to take over the world!*" (her emphasis)?

When it comes to name calling, that surely beats "Miss."

NOTES & ASIDES

■ Dear Mr. Buckley:

NATIONAL REVIEW has recently lured me into a trap from which I am finding it very difficult to escape. I received from NATIONAL REVIEW, as a gift, a copy of your book *The Blackford Oakes Reader*.

I was captivated by the character Blackford Oakes, and found myself eager to read of his full adventures. Upon checking my shelves I found that I had a copy of *Marco Polo, If You Can*, unread, of course, and no doubt a prior gift from NATIONAL REVIEW.

The next evening I read *Marco*, which I thoroughly enjoyed, and determined that I would secure the other nine titles. And so my saga began. I am writing to you now with the hope that you might direct me to a positive settlement of my dilemma.

I called B. Dalton and they were able to help me out with only one title, *High Jinx*, which is now on order. I was able to secure from the clerk the names and telephone numbers of the publishers of the remaining eight titles.

Avon advised that they no longer had publication rights to *Saving the Queen* and could not tell me who now does.

HarperCollins advised that only *Tucker* was still in print, which I ordered directly from them.

Dell and Thorndike advised that their titles were no longer in print.

Morrow has apparently changed its phone number and I have been unable to contact it.

You can imagine my frustration building; hence this letter to you.

Is there an aftermarket outfit that might have the titles I seek? Might you possibly have extra copies lying around that you would graciously agree to sell to me?

Any assistance you might render will be sincerely appreciated.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours truly,
Grady Greer
Toledo Carolina, Inc.
P.O. Box 12210
Florence, S.C. 29504-0210

Dear Mr. Greer: Thank you for your inquiry. Alas, publishers remainder hardbacks, and paperback vendors shred unsold copies. I wish we had enough lying around to fill your needs. A suggestion: Try an out-of-print outlet. If that fails, try the library. If *that* fails, let me know and I'll lend you my personal copies. Cordially,
WFB

■ Dear Mr. Buckley:

I keep reading about politicians who are liberal on social issues, but conservative on economic ones. How can this be when it is the social liberals who support the government programs, thereby ending any hope of fiscal conservatism? Please enlighten me.

Sincerely,
Nancy Blake Bohne
Englewood, Colo.

Dear Mrs. Bohne: The two primary "social" issues ask whether, and if so how, the government should figure on the question of abortion and church/state separation. If fetuses are human beings, then they can be protected only by the state, there being no other agencies authorized to protect life. If communities are free to decide what should be the role of religion in their schools, then the state should stay out of the way of the democratic right of the community. On the matter of pornography, the settled understanding, for centuries, was that obscenity is not entitled to the conventional protections of free speech. Cordially, **—WFB**

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CAPITAL SCENE

Is the Net Closing In? Part I

JOHN H. FUND

Roberto Parada

WASHINGTON, D.C.

TWO years of media hibernation on Whitewater began to end this month. The catalyst was the White House's taking the extraordinary step of asserting "executive privilege" in refusing to comply with a congressional subpoena for notes on a Whitewater meeting. Press secretaries for Whitewater committees on the Hill reported a dramatic surge in media interest and requests for briefings. "The White House is now seen by the media as using the same defense Richard Nixon did twenty years ago, and that piques their interest," one press secretary told us. "The year 1996 will see a lot of attention on Whitewater."

Indeed, the *Washington Post* actually deployed the word "Watergate" in the second paragraph of its story on the White House's refusal to honor the subpoena. The *New York Times* used "Watergate" in the first paragraph of its story. "It's a coverup of something," said Chris Matthews, an aide to the late Democratic Speaker Tip O'Neill and now a columnist for the *San Francisco Examiner*. "It has all the trappings of Watergate without the break-in. We don't know what went wrong, but we know something doesn't smell right."

What has triggered the comparisons to the mother of all presidential scandals is clear: the same President who promised full cooperation with Whitewater investigations is now withholding information. Asked in March 1994 if he would ever claim executive or attorney–client privilege on Whitewater, President Clinton said, "My interest . . . is to get the facts out. . . . So it's hard to imagine a circumstance in which that would be an appropriate thing for me to do." Apparently, a serious investigation is such a circumstance.

Reporters are also frustrated by constant instances of the Clinton Administration stonewalling requests for information. "If this Administration and its allies are good at anything it's imaginative non-cooperation with congressional committees," says Carl Cannon, White House correspondent for the *Baltimore Sun*. Harry Thomason, the President's Hollywood pal who orchestrated the White House Travel Office firings, has refused to turn over all his relevant records on the scandal to a congressional committee. Key White House players canceled interviews on the Travel Office and said they would cooperate only if leak-prone staffers from the Democratic minority were allowed to sit in—an unusual demand that no committee chairman in the last Congress would have even entertained.

But the most formidable wall has been erected around a November 5, 1993, conclave at which White House lawyers met with the Clintons' personal lawyers to discuss Whitewater strategy. The White House has issued "instructions" to current and former Clinton aides not to testify about the meeting. It implausibly argues that the attorney–client privilege bars them from discussing the two-hour meeting.

The meeting was hosted by David Kendall, the Clinton's private attorney on Whitewater, and included a fascinating cast of players. There was James Lyons, the Denver lawyer who issued the inaccurate "Lyons report" during the 1992 campaign that ended media interest in Whitewater until Bill Clinton had been safely inaugurated. Bernie Nussbaum, then White House counsel, was there along with William Kennedy, the former Rose Law Firm partner who was his associate White House counsel, and Bruce Lindsey, a presidential troubleshooter on Whitewater who is now White House deputy counsel.

All this legal firepower was gathered shortly after a curious chain of events in which White House officials obtained confidential information about a Resolution Trust Corporation probe of Madison Guaranty, the failed Arkansas S&L that was owned by James McDougal, the Clintons' onetime business partner. That information included word that criminal referrals that mentioned the President and the First Lady as possible targets of the investigation had been prepared.

Mr. Kennedy took some twenty pages of notes at the meeting, and Mr. Lindsey later prepared an extensive memorandum based on those notes. What Sen. Alfonse D'Amato's Whitewater committee wants to know is whether, in the course of this meeting, confidential government information was passed along to the President's defense team. If it was, that might well constitute an "obstruction of justice," another term redolent of Watergate.

Whatever happened at that meeting and similar sessions at the White House in late 1993, Clinton aides are certainly anxious not to discuss it. Mr. Lindsey exasperated senators this month with his complete inability to explain his own handwritten notes of key Whitewater meetings. Sen. D'Amato characterized Mr. Lindsey's memory lapses as "disingenuous" and "preposterous."

The refusal of Mr. Lindsey to cooperate with Sen. D'Amato's committee has extended to claiming that the attorney–client privilege bars him from revealing who attended key meetings on Whitewater at the White House. He claims that he and other lawyers were merely gathering information to answer

Mr. Fund is a member of the Wall Street Journal*'s editorial board.*

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media questions on Whitewater. That strikes even New York University law professor Stephen Gillers, a noted liberal, as "odd": "If the White House counsel were designated to field media inquiries they wouldn't be acting as lawyers" who could claim attorney–client privilege, he says.

Indeed, a Democratic Senate aide on the Whitewater committee concedes that the White House may be "stretching" its claim of attorney–client privilege. Most legal scholars would go even further. The privilege protects communication only between an attorney and the client. But Mr. Clinton wasn't present at the November 5, 1993, meeting, and neither Mr. Lindsey nor Mr. Kennedy was his attorney on Whitewater. They were government employees who were barred from representing private clients while working at the White House; hence, they can't claim to be President Clinton's attorneys except on matters where "executive privilege" would apply. Recognizing that fact, the White House is now claiming that its Whitewater discussions are potentially covered by "executive privilege." Richard Nixon made the same claim for his discussions on Watergate in 1974 but saw his position unanimously rejected by the Supreme Court.

The White House's flimsy justifications for its non-cooperation can only be interpreted as an attempt to conceal information. Editorials in both the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* have roasted the Clintons for their evasive maneuvers. The White House's stonewalling has only whetted the appetite of Washington reporters, who are never more interested in information than when they are denied it.

Why then is the Administration reviving the ghost of Watergate past with its claims of executive privilege and failure to turn over records? Lisa Myers of NBC believes the President is willing to pay a short-term political price because he "can probably tie up this issue in the courts so that, if he loses, he won't have to turn over any embarrassing documents until after the election." After all, a similar policy of stalling for time and deflecting media attention worked brilliantly during the 1992 campaign when Whitewater first surfaced.

But this time the focus on Whitewater is not likely to be so easily lost. The Administration faces a series of upcoming events that are likely to keep Whitewater in the news.

1. The trial of Jim Guy Tucker, Mr. Clinton's hand-picked successor as governor of Arkansas, on fraud charges related to Whitewater is scheduled to begin on January 16 in Little Rock. Gov. Tucker borrowed heavily from Madison Guaranty and from a company owned by David Hale that was supposed to lend only to disadvantaged businesses. Some of the loans are believed to have contributed to Madison's failure. For his part, Mr. Hale, a former municipal judge who has been convicted of fraud, claims that Mr. Clinton personally encouraged him to make a fraudulent $300,000 loan.

2. Sen. D'Amato's next set of hearings, in January, will concern the tangled affairs of Dan Lasater, a Clinton family friend. In the 1980s, Mr. Lasater was an Arkansas high-flyer who gave a job to Mr. Clinton's half-brother, Roger, helped the younger Clinton pay off drug debts, and was a major contributor to Bill Clinton's campaigns. Mr. Lasater was awarded lucrative state bond contracts while he was being investigated for cocaine distribution. He was convicted and sentenced to thirty months in prison in 1986, although he was later pardoned by Gov. Clinton. While he was in prison his business affairs were handled by Patsy Thomason, who was one of three White House aides who secretly searched Vincent Foster's office within hours of his death.

3. Rep. Jim Leach, chairman of the House Banking Committee, is preparing hearings later this winter into the mysterious goings-on at Mena, Arkansas. An airfield there has been connected with CIA operations and alleged drug running. Federal and state investigations of Mena during the 1980s were frustrated. Some members of Mr. Leach's committee want to know if Gov. Clinton's administration had anything to do with the failure to find out what happened there.

There are three standards by which one can judge the Clintons on Whitewater: legal, which means whether or not they committed actual crimes; ethical, which involves whether they have acted in a way appropriate to their high station in life; and political, which concerns whether the American people feel Mr. Clinton should be trusted with another four years in office. Independent counsel Kenneth Starr will judge on the first standard, and no one yet knows if he has found anything. On the issue of ethics, the parallels between this Administration and that of Richard Nixon are almost eerie and are likely to inspire at least a couple of television documentaries. On the political front, upcoming revelations are likely to leave voters feeling that they were denied a complete picture of the Clintons in the 1992 campaign and likely to demand one before they vote in 1996.

This time around the media may not give the First Family a free pass. What is certainly true is that reporters who it sometimes seemed would become interested in Whitewater only if there was evidence that the President and First Lady had robbed a bank in broad daylight are now focusing on why the White House consistently acts as if it has something to hide. □

Is the Net Closing In? Part II

GEORGE TOBIN

WASHINGTON, D.C.

THIS week Newt Gingrich was found innocent of an ethics charge for nearly the 300th time since he became a member of the House 17 years ago. The official count may never be known because the Ethics Committee does not make charges public unless formal action is taken or Democrats choose to leak them. Overall, Gingrich's career ethics scorecard is roughly as follows: 300 exonerations, about a dozen *de minimis* technical violations, zero serious violations.

There is also a pending investigation of a charge already investigated in depth on at least three previous occasions. In addition, at least two new false charges are expected to be filed within a few days by the usual suspects. Lastly, if Republicans are successful in the budget battle and continue to be headed for a gain of seats in the House, Gingrich will undoubtedly face more charges.

The attack on Gingrich has been unrelenting since 1989, when he toppled

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the demonstrably corrupt Speaker of the House Jim Wright. In retaliation, Gingrich was subjected to approximately two hundred ethics charges at that time. The latest barrage is in retaliation for having taken the House away from the Democrats. Because the get-Gingrich campaign is organized by the House minority leadership and has the active assistance of outside groups and media allies, and given that Democrats appear to be increasingly reluctant to speak to the issues, the abuse of Newt Gingrich is likely to continue unless Republicans begin to fire back.

On December 6, the Ethics Committee broke a year-long political logjam with the issuance of a letter to Gingrich announcing the disposition of six charges, and dismissing some sixty other charges as being either groundless or of such minor import as not to merit taking any action. The committee's ruling can be summarized as follows:

1. Gingrich's book deal was completely ethical and lawful. The alleged link with Rupert Murdoch was nonexistent. However, the committee was offended that Gingrich made so much money and will propose rules changes to prevent members from receiving such sums in the future.

2. Gingrich's fund-raising appeals on behalf of the foundation(s) sponsoring his college course and his dealings with prospective donors were ethical and lawful.

3. The presence of a campaign staff member in Gingrich's House offices during his transition to the Speakership was not a violation, but it could have created an appearance of "commingling" political and legislative activities.

4. There is nothing unethical about the manner in which Gingrich's college course was aired by an educational cable channel.

5. Even though the Ethics Committee gave Gingrich advance written permission to publicize his college course by inserting any part or all of the course materials into the *Congressional Record*, Gingrich should not have revealed the 1-800 phone number for the course. Similarly, Gingrich should not have mentioned during Special Orders a planned nationwide town meeting sponsored by GOPAC, the political-education committee he founded.

6. The remaining charge, that Gingrich's activities in relation to the college course were in violation of federal tax laws "with his knowledge and approval," will be referred to an outside counsel.

This special counsel is authorized only to look into the single issue in question, an investigation that should require only a few days but that is likely to be dragged out for as long as Committee Democrats can manage. In addition, the Democrats will now attempt to make this counsel a permanent figure by insisting that all future charges be referred directly to the special counsel.

The reason the special counsel *should* not need much time to dispose of the issue is that Gingrich's college course and everyone ever connected with it have been investigated by the media, by politically hostile Georgia college officials, and twice by the Ethics Committee itself. No one has ever come up with

Roberto Parada

any evidence of impropriety with respect to the tax status of the foundations involved. Every document concerning the course is already in the hands of the Ethics Committee. Thousands of pages of documents have been produced in response to the political attacks by Georgia Democrats and in order to meet the 1994 demands of Jim McDermott, who was then chairman of the Ethics Committee. Democratic staff lawyers for the committee have already reviewed this material, as has Rep. David Bonior (D., Mich.), the leader of the get-Gingrich effort. If no one has found a smoking gun by now, there isn't likely to be one.

The crux of the outside counsel's inquiry is this: Did the 501(c)(3) nonprofit foundations that supported and produced the course improperly give resources to political or commercial entities or to individuals? It is already well established through exhaustive and repeated inquiries that Gingrich himself has received nothing for writing or teaching the course. There is no evidence that Gingrich's campaigns or GOPAC received any funds or other material assistance from the course.

The very fact that the Democrats on the committee held out for appointment of a special counsel was an act of malice and bad faith. Ranking member McDermott should have had the grace to dismiss what he now knows beyond a reasonable doubt, based on the analysis of his own staff lawyers, to be meritless charges. Instead he dragged this process out for maximum injury to Newt Gingrich. McDermott, Bonior, and other Democratic co-conspirators have knowingly and maliciously abused the ethics process.

Furthermore, Rep. Bonior is now expected to direct his attention to crafting accusations about the legality of GOPAC's actions while Gingrich was in charge of it. Democrats have bestirred the Federal Election Commission to file charges that GOPAC staff members improperly spoke to one another about federal elections even though GOPAC was not then registered as a federal PAC. In ruling on preliminary motions, U.S. District Court Judge Louis Oberdorfer informed the FEC lawyers that this creative expansion of the statute will not wash. The FEC will instead be required to show that there were actual GOPAC contributions to actual federal election campaigns, a standard the FEC will not be able to meet. However, GOPAC's innocence in this regard will not deter Mr. Bonior from alleging that Gingrich did something wrong.

Unfortunately, none of Gingrich's accusers will be faced with charges for deliberate misuse of the ethics process. No member of the House in this century has been reprimanded for filing false, groundless, or malicious charges against another member. As long as the Ethics Committee is planning to propose rules changes, why not a new rule that requires the accuser of an exonerated member to recite an apology drafted by the Ethics Committee? Better still, the accuser should be ordered to pay any legal fees or costs incurred by the victim. Without some deterrent or penalty, combined with a more energetic GOP response, there will be a continuing barrage of charges against Gingrich hurled by the remainder of the Danny Ortega wing of the Democratic Party. □

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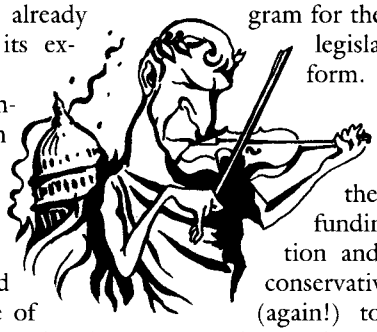
BREAD & CIRCUSES

WHEN Members of Congress finally head home for the holidays they will have ended the busiest legislative session in the last 14 years; both houses convened during 1995 for three months more than last year. How is the show being received? Well, even without thunderous applause for the Act I Contract with America, and despite the intermission in Act II's balanced-budget act, the House Republican leadership is already scripting an encore for its exhausted troupe.



Much depends on whether a deal is reached with President Clinton on the budget. If so, veteran Members and the freshman ingenues alike believe they can look forward to a more measured pace of activity next year. Congressional Republicans will be focusing on implementing the budget provisions. But 1996 being a presidential election year, they will also be timing their debates and floor votes on new issues to cause maximum discomfort for candidate Clinton. Without a budget deal, however, the arguments over Medicare, tax cuts, welfare reform, and Medicaid will remain at the center of congressional politics—and of the presidential race. Deal or no deal, next year promises to be every bit as contentious as this year has been.

But there will be no second Contract with America. As one leadership aide explains, "It was easier last year to draw up the Contract because many Members had little interest in it." He points out that a second version of the Contract could never accommodate the specific interests of enough Members to win consensus support. Still, Republicans recognize the success of last year's common message and the importance of the "promises kept" strategy. So they plan to unveil a joint legislative agenda for their presidential nominee and congressional candidates to run on following their convention in August.

San Diego is nine months away, however. What will the GOP talk about in the meantime? Senator Dole won't be sitting down with his committee chairmen until January to lay out a legislative agenda that promotes issues he views as helpful to his presidential campaign. But the House leadership has sketched out an agenda: on immigration reform, eliminating race and gender preferences, campaign-finance restrictions, an empowerment/community-renewal program for the cities, parental-rights legislation, and banking reform. As well as this fresh agenda, some old issues will be back to cause dissension in the ranks. There will be funding disputes over abortion and Title X, and House conservatives are determined (again!) to see large spending cuts imposed on the National Endowment for the Arts and Legal Services Corporation.

New and old issues alike will provoke tough fights within the Republican caucus. One Hill staffer predicts that Newt Gingrich will regret not having the discipline of this year's Contract to enforce consensus. "The Contract provided momentum that kept the caucus together, but next year Members will be looking at their individual races and the issues they care about," he explains. Still, GOP strategists hope that if these issues provoke some fratricide among Republicans, they can also be framed to threaten regicide at the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue.

"This stuff scares Clinton to death," declares a House Judiciary Committee staffer about the bill introduced by Rep. Charles Canady (R., Fla.) to eliminate federal race and gender preferences. As proof he points to the Administration's refusal to disclose the results of its review of preference and set-aside programs undertaken following the Supreme Court's *Adarand* decision holding that such programs are subject to strict scrutiny. Scared or not, however, Mr. Clinton has to fight on this issue; his liberal base will insist. He is therefore expected to begin by laying down a smokescreen of disinformation, claiming (falsely) that he too opposes quotas, and that the Republican bill weakens existing anti-discrimination laws. A donnybrook is likely. But the leadership is committed to the Canady bill and its supporters are confident they can win—if their colleagues have the stomach for the fight.

Some have ulcers. More timid Republicans, fearful that the race card will be played against them, want the new empowerment/community-renewal package (sponsored by Oklahoma's J. C. Watts and Missouri's Jim Talent) moved first. The Watts–Talent bill, designed with the help of community self-help groups, is expected to include tax and regulatory relief for inner cities, school-choice provisions, and housing reforms. Watts and Talent promote the bill on its merits, recoiling from any connection with the debate over affirmative action. GOP moderates insist they need its cover to help them do the right thing.

The Republican caucus remains divided over legal immigration—with House Majority Leader Dick Armey strongly opposed to new restrictions. The President, on the other hand, gave an instant welcome to the Jordan Commission's proposals to cut legal immigration. Apparently, he feels Jimmy Carter lost him the Arkansas governorship in 1980 by admitting the *Mariel*'s Cuban immigrants. He doesn't intend to lose himself the White House over immigrants—and he has already invaded Haiti to prove it.

THAT leaves campaign-finance reform, where the impetus comes from the freshman class. Party strategists are less gung-ho, fearing its provisions will damage GOP candidates and that even raising the issue will fuel public cynicism about Congress—now run by the Republicans. Caring little for such calculations, the freshman class plans a retreat in January to determine next year's priorities. Institutional reforms and the elimination of Cabinet agencies will be top priorities, as will the parental-rights legislation sponsored by their fellow freshman, Steve Largent of Oklahoma.

Many freshmen believe they were thwarted in their attempts to advance proposals this year. They will be less compliant next year. So, God rest ye merry, gentlemen, there'll be little respite in the new year. —KATE O'BEIRNE

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ON THE SCENE

The Revolting French

JOHN LAUGHLAND

Roman Genn

PARIS

THERE is a fundamental ideological difference between the recent massive industrial and student unrest in France, and the events of May 1968 to which much idle reference has been made. The students who led the springtime movement were self-consciously modernist and progressive. By contrast, the strike which has paralyzed France this winter is explicitly reactionary and anti-internationalist.

The unions are determined to "preserve acquired social rights," and to resist what they regard as modern phenomena such as "world liberalism," "the dictatorship of the markets," and "the internationalization of the French economy." Very often, the language of the strikers has descended into straightforward Romantic anti-capitalism. Marc Blondel, one of the most powerful union leaders, declared that he was fighting to prevent France from becoming "an Anglo-Saxon country"—by which he presumably meant to attack the rootlessness and social dislocation which, like many of his compatriots, he assumes come from deregulation and private enterprise. Others have attacked "France's prostration before the financial markets and interest rates" and argued that "social rights" and "public services" are "the foundation-stone of the identity of our Republic." Hence, something called "Maastrichtian liberalism" must be rejected.

However, the unions do not merely want to prevent certain government reforms, or to retain certain privileges. They want to preserve and even enhance the corporatist structures which govern the French state, for these are the bedrock of their power. For example, one of the strike's main targets has been the government's plan to reform the French Social Security system, whose bureaucratic wastefulness is legendary, whose chronic deficit exceeds that of the French state, and whose administration alone employs some 180,000 people. The government proposed, *inter alia*, to transfer to Parliament the control over the obligatory deductions which are made from workers' paychecks for medical "insurance." The unions are determined to resist this transfer, for at present these payments are determined by a cozy arrangement between themselves, management, and the state—which they dominate.

There is, then, a deeper political agenda. As one mainstream academic wrote, excitedly anticipating increasing disruption, "Entire sectors of the population, the proletarian majority, will erupt. They will enter directly and physically into the struggle, determining their true objectives on the basis of their class interests! This will happen soon. And what kind of democracy is this? Not 'liberal' democracy—that unfortunate adjective which dilutes it—but democracy without an adjective, just democracy, period." The battle, in other words, is between liberal democracy and the power of the mob.

It seems incredible that a newly elected right-wing government has been unable to stand up to such a flagrant constitutional and political challenge. The strikers, who have demonstrated with the red flag and have sung the "*Internationale*," have given plenty of easy hostages to fortune, which it should have been easy for the government to attack in the name of its electoral mandate. Unfortunately, the government's weakness toward the strikers is no coincidence: it is an inevitable consequence of the rejection of capitalism and political liberalism, which runs very deep in the French psyche, and with which the government is itself afflicted. Politicians across the political spectrum frequently denounce "savage capitalism" and "a society in which money is the sole criteria of social regulation." Even the former prime minister, Edouard Balladur, once told the *Financial Times* that the market was "the law of the jungle." Far from setting out a political agenda for reform, indeed, the new government, from the moment when it was elected, presented itself as the champion of France's bankrupt Social Security system and bloated state sector—even though, with the latter consuming 55 per cent of GDP, France has the highest proportion of state spending in the industrial world.

This explains why the French government has already climbed down on several issues contested by the unions, and even postponed others (such as an urgently needed tax reform) which the unions had not yet explicitly attacked. It was precisely because Jacques Chirac campaigned on a potpourri of mutually incompatible policies, including the maintenance of "social protection" at all costs, that his government has now been unable to argue its case. Before the strike, Chirac let it be known that he was close friends with Marc Blondel and that he would do nothing to upset him. Even during the strike, the prime minister, Alain Juppé, was repeatedly at pains to declare his "understanding" and "feeling" for the strikers wreaking havoc on the country. Consequently, the president has allowed the decisions of the elected government to be usurped by a powerful lobby.

But there is a deeper point. The crisis has been aggravated precisely because

Mr. Laughland is the author of The Death of Politics: France under Mitterrand.

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the government itself barely believes in the reforms it started to introduce in November. It only began to get serious about reducing its debt after the Germans had expressed their disapproval of its initial budget in September. But to adopt a policy only because of external pressure is implicitly to reveal oneself not to be the legitimate and supreme arbiter: hence the failure to meet the constitutional challenge from the unions.

The government's motives are all the more suspect because the reduction of debt is itself being undertaken only in order to qualify for admission to the European Monetary Union, an aim which is in turn only being pursued because France hopes that the creation of a European economic area will cushion its economy from world competition. In other words, the opposition between the government and the unions is little but the refraction into two divergent currents of the same fundamentally anti-liberal agenda.

These beliefs are not confined to France. In a recent report on the future institutional development of the European Union, there is much talk of the necessity to preserve "European values," which mainly consist of socialist policies. Even the Germans are increasingly in favor of European integration for protectionist reasons: German industry wants a single currency area to protect German exports from high German wage costs, while the unions want the Social Chapter to protect themselves from lower salaries elsewhere in the EU. Recent developments in France, therefore, are indicative of the likely drift of politics across Europe: increasingly socialist, increasingly undemocratic, and increasingly ungovernable. □

Cultural Cringe

KENNETH MINOGUE

SYDNEY

WE ALL have friends who suffer from an inferiority complex. They can never stop comparing themselves with others, and they always find themselves wanting. This affliction is not limited to individuals. Nations can suffer from it too. To judge from some recent noise in the media, 18 million Australians spend a good deal of time worrying about their collective worthiness.

The local name for the malady is "cultural cringe" or, sometimes, "the koala cringe." Cringe is the settled conviction that everything foreign is good, and everything local is bad. Clive James, who lives in England, once referred to Australia as a mysterious triangle in the southern oceans where talent disappears without trace, but he hardly expected to be taken at his word. Sometimes Australians think of themselves as invisible to outsiders, as in the rumor that a film about their national epic—*Gallipoli*—was advertised in Times Square with the slogan: "A story you'll never forget, from a country you've never heard of." But the real touchiness is felt when Australians leave their country to find fame and fortune elsewhere. The nation like a kind of Jewish mother feels that leaving can be nothing but rejection.

They didn't much mind about Errol Flynn, who was a rolling stone anyway, or Robert Hughes, who writes about Australian themes and keeps in touch. The novelist Frank Moorhouse, however, has just received a hot blast of nationalist resentment. He has lived in France for two decades, and at a literary luncheon in Sydney chose to speak publicly about the Australian disposition to treat anyone who went to live in another country as a kind of traitor. He was instantly denounced by a woman at the meeting, and columnists and letter writers have been living off him ever since.

The point about an inferiority complex is that, as with all psychic ailments, it is impervious to reality. Mere success is certainly no cure. Australia is a rich, prosperous, and free modern society with all the stigmata of contemporary thoughtfulness: its intellectuals get into a terrible twist about its racism, sexism, and isms yet to be invented. Its treatment of its small minority of native peoples, the Aborigines, is building up into a decently complex race problem. In fact, it boxes above its demographic weight. A world power in tennis and other sports, it exports opera singers by the ton, can boast Nobel Prizes for science and literature, and its films are capable of hitting the international market.

How then can anyone bear to leave it to live abroad? Perhaps only nations of immigrants suffer from this remarkable kind of insecurity. The British don't feel affronted when someone takes off for America, Australia, or other parts of the new world. But, as Australian novelist Jon Cleary has observed, Australia is not alone in being beastly to expatriates. Malcolm Cowley had told him in New York that Hemingway, Fitzgerald, and others of the Paris crowd had run into local resentment when they went back home. Years later, Irwin Shaw was given the same treatment when he came back from Paris and Switzerland. Can it be that America too has a touch of the dreaded IC?

THE characteristic tactic by which all sufferers from an inferiority complex deal with their trauma is by making resolutions. They may be inadequate now, but by stern acts of will (often buttressed by a library of self-help manuals), they will become something the world will just have to take notice of. And that is why Australians have gone overboard for 2000 A.D. Other nations are thinking of grand projects, but the Australians, who have already been awarded the Millennial Olympics, are dreaming of nothing less than self-transformation.

The instrument of transformation will be a new constitution, and the change will be something big. Nothing less than the move from a monarchy to a republic. A monarchy? you might ask, incredulously. Can Australia be a monarchy? Indeed it can. Its technical head of state is Elizabeth II, the same monarch who is also Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Americans, who got rid of George III in 1778, sometimes find this hard to believe, and that is also the sentiment of many, but by no means all, Australians. In particular, the intellectual ones.

Monarchy in Australia is, of course, almost, but not quite, a technical matter. A Governor General, who is these days always Australian, is effectively head of state and performs all ceremonial functions except on the odd occasions when the Queen may actually be present in Australia. This head of state is politically neutral and acts only on the advice of democratically elected ministers. On rare occasions, highly politi-

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cally charged acts are the responsibility of the head of state. He might have to break a deadlock by choosing a parliamentarian to form a government, or dismiss a ministry that seemed to have violated the constitution. The Governor General in 1975 dismissed the Labour Government of Gough Whitlam and caused an uproar. But the resolution of the crisis came in the election immediately following. Whitlam was defeated.

Monarchy in Australia, say the republicans, is an anachronism. This is an argument that might cut both ways. After all, to attack an institution as anachronistic is equivalent to believing that the practices of the present are so superior to what we have inherited that everything must fall into line with them. Who in his senses can believe such an absurdity?

As all conservatives know, what grows is better than what is made. The official Australian national anthem, for example, is an unloved dirge called "Advance Australia Fair." It sounds as if it had been synthesized in a test tube. Few people have much grip on the tune, even fewer the words. When Hollywood wants to indicate Australia, it uses a few bars of "Waltzing Matilda," a song about a somewhat disreputable tramp, or "swagman," which Australians sing spontaneously, and everybody picks up the reference.

The Australian republic is being made in the political test tubes of the present moment. There was a time when republicans thought that it could happen with easy inevitability—like hearing the other shoe drop, as the poet Les Murray put it. But it turns out that monarchy, long ignored and taken for granted, is closer to the heart of things than most Australians imagined.

The whole thing looked easy: just abandon the Queen and call the Governor General "Mr. President." The Queen herself has made it clear that she will not stand between Australia and a democratic decision. No head need roll in the cause of "bringing Australia up to date." Indeed, it is that rather banal ambition to be just like other countries that lies behind a lot of Australian republicanism. Republicans often say that Asian countries, in particular, don't understand that Australia is genuinely independent, and will respect her only when even the purely formal link with Britain is severed. Lee Kuan Yew is one Asian leader who has scoffed at this idea. But it is typical of the sufferer from an inferiority complex to be constantly worried about his image.

The Australian head of state, notionally representing the Queen, is chosen by the government, but how would a republican president be chosen? Polls suggest that Australians overwhelmingly would want to choose a president for themselves. But a popularly chosen president would be no formal figurehead, rather a powerful figure who could throw his weight around. In other words, the Australian government would cease to follow the Westminster model and would begin to approach the Washington model. These are deep waters.

Deeper indeed than even this suggests. The Queen may be a purely formal figurehead, but she constitutes the formal unity of Australia. To be an Australian citizen is to be a subject of

Roberto Parada

the Queen. Does this sound a little quaint, even medieval? Perhaps—but what it does is to keep at bay much more worrying ideas of unity which a republic must inevitably provoke, and which might well cause serious social conflict in the country—for example, the idea that Australia is a federation of different ethnic groups.

Australian Aborigines claim to have been here for 40,000 years, which is rather longer than the whites, who began to arrive in 1788. Aborigines now have a flag of their own, and it has been given official recognition. Some want sovereignty, and issues of land ownership are becoming increasingly torrid. To stir this cauldron by weakening Australia's formal unity does seem rather like a self-inflicted wound.

The problem in part is that republicans can find no other way to sell their project than to denigrate Australia's past and present. And to understand this is to recognize that the whole idea of "cultural cringe" (like most talk about searching for a collective identity) is nothing more than a bit of intellectual froth on Australian life. As Tony Abbot, an opposition member of Parliament, pointed out in *The Minimal Monarchy*, Australians have had a powerful and self-confident identity since the first native-born generation in the early nineteenth century. They have distinguished themselves, for example, in the wars of this century as "plucky fighters and sloppy saluters"; and in choosing to call themselves a "Commonwealth" when they federated in 1901, they declared a distinctive constitutional egalitarianism which was by no means unconscious of its Cromwellian overtones.

It is in supporting this conception of a free and undictatorial Australia that the republican poet Les Murray has drawn back from the current republican movement. He is worried that in the present intellectual climate, dominated by the orthodoxy of republicanism, most people "are going to be punished with extreme social opprobrium if they express certain opinions which are not on the agenda. They can lose their social life, their sexual life, their jobs."

The whole idea of an inferiority complex is, of course, a piece of outmoded psychological jargon. Useful as a tag, it just puts a veil over reality. Everybody has feelings of inadequacy, and the shy are just those who take them too seriously. This is no doubt why national resentments, such as the "cringe," are generally found among intellectuals. It has often been noted that shy, insecure people are potential emotional tyrants. And today's intellectuals are full of opinions about how to live that they would like to impose on their fellows. Australians pride themselves in being a classless society, but they are certainly divided into an intellectual elite and a non-intellectual mass. It is the intellectuals, with their thirst for novelty, who have turned republicanism into the sort of orthodoxy that can break up dinner parties because people start shouting at one another. An intellectual can be defined as someone who would rather win an argument than get his policy accepted. And for the moment at least, intellectuals are winning the argument, but the future of their republican cause looks distinctly insecure. □

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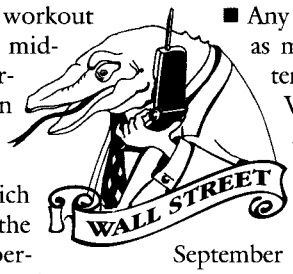
GEKKO

BACK in the Eighties, many of the Eurotrash I'd meet in Manhattan nightclubs were in the "private banking" business. Even as the Citibank and Manufacturers Hanover workout people would be burning the midnight oil over the "restructuring" of bum Latin American loans, their colleagues in the private-banking divisions would be entertaining rich Latinos at Mortimer's and the Surf Club, in the hopes of persuading them to leave their questionably sourced assets in the very banks whose sovereign loans had been looted. It wasn't a completely closed system—some of the money siphoned from the exchequers south of the border trickled off to lawyers and cocaine dealers—but enough money was left in New York to help start the Latin equity boom of the Nineties.



Alas, another Wall Street business is in decline, and this time we can't really blame ex-Governor Cuomo. I had dinner a short while ago with, among other people, the manager of a Swiss bank's New York branch. In the old days, people in his position needed fluent Spanish and a familiarity with Buenos Aires restaurants. But times, he told me, have changed.

"It used to be that more than 90 per cent of our business in New York came from visiting Latin Americans, but NAFTA and the increased exchange of information among the tax authorities has put an end to that," he said with regret. "Now, our business is almost half Americans. Maybe seven or eight years ago, they began to get the idea that they could have controls imposed on their taking money out of the country. Estate taxes, especially in places like New York State, are a problem. They also began to worry that some day their right to hold gold in this country could be taken away again. So they started to set up foreign holding companies through us. And when Americans decide to do something, they really get into it."

What about the old Latin customers? "They're going directly to Switzerland or London. If they're really dirty, they have to go somewhere like Hungary. But you don't get good service there."

■ Any good investment depends as much on timing as on content. A good case in point is Venezuelan equities. After lying flatter than road kill for several months, the Caracas stock index soared 58 per cent from late September to mid December. Jimmy Rogers, who's been a star investor, Columbia business-school professor, and CNBC commentator, was telling his audience that the time to invest in a country was when it was on its back, and that Venezuela fit the bill. As the index showed, a lot of people apparently agreed with Jimmy.

Problem. On December 11, the Venezuelan government grudgingly followed the advice (probably misguided) of the International Monetary Fund and devalued the official exchange rate of the bolivar by 41.4 per cent. That takes the dollar value of the Caracas index to about 6 per cent below where it was when the "boom" started. That's show biz.

Frequently, financial columnists and the like blame corrupt and stupid governments for imposing irrational policies on otherwise virtuous nations. That can be true. It can also be true that people get the government they deserve, and that is probably more the case in Venezuela, which has frequent, multiple-choice elections, than it is elsewhere. Now of course we are supposed to have evolved beyond judging people by national stereotypes, but . . . a lot of those Latins who arrived in New York on Capital Flight Airlines in the Eighties were Venezuelans, and we had the opportunity to assess their national character.

"My wife and I have decided to stay together for the sake of the condo."

It was clearly severely crippled by their having had their wealth come out of holes in the ground rather than from factories or farms. Venezuelan politics, which my old friend David Sawyer used to manipulate professionally, are based on a redistributionist philosophy compounded by breathtaking dishonesty and incompetence.

Even this devaluation doesn't bring the bolivar down to the black-market rate. While the official rate went from 170 to the dollar to 290 to the dollar, the "parallel" is around 320 to the dollar. Over time, the idea is for the parallel and the official rates to converge and for the country to reach a new agreement with the IMF that will put it on the road to the international bureaucrats' notion of orthodoxy.

In the meantime, the Venezuelan government continues to impose crippling multiple exchange rates, punitive taxes, and byzantine regulations. There is relief from all this—for a price. An American friend of mine had lunch with a very highly placed Venezuelan government official this spring. When my friend asked what the policy priority of the government was, the Vennie replied, "Our highest priority is to root out corruption in all its forms." Then they both burst into guffaws.

■ Of course for viciousness and crude theft, Russia's politicians are unbeatable. Now the question is which privatization deals done in the past couple of years will get undone and redistributed among new people.

An example of a "privatization" deal that might well be undone is Norilsk Nickel. The minimum bid for the auction of the state's shares in this company, which took place earlier in the fall, was set at $170,000,000. The highest bid was $360,000,000. The winning bid was $170,100,000. Not surprisingly, the disappointed higher bidders expressed some reservations about the cleanliness of the auction process. I wouldn't want to be the issuer of the life and accident policies on the new owners. This is, after all, a country where three parliamentary deputies have been murdered in the past month.

—JOHN DIZARD

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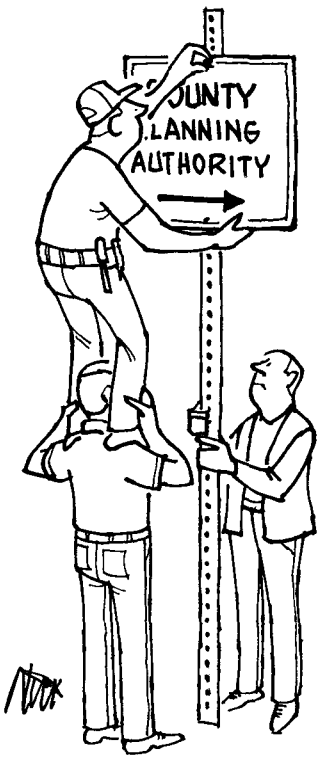
help

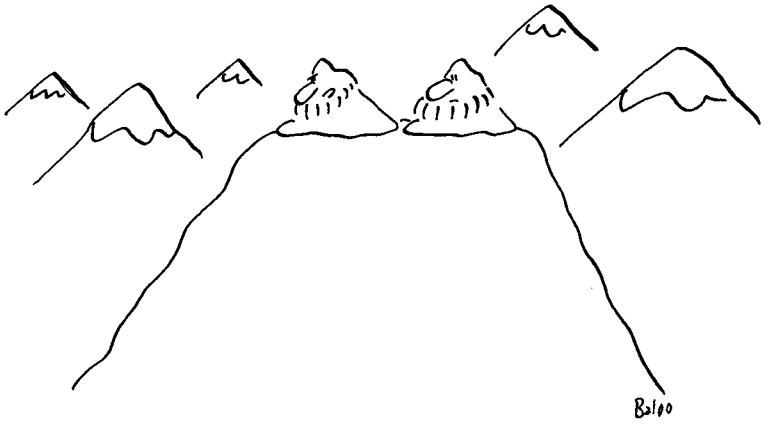


"Frightening, isn't it? Politicians as far as the eye can see."

Happy New Year

Pat Schroeder's hanging up her bra.
Though men still man a gondola
While pinching the unwary, she
Brought rakehells to a bended knee;
But on the other hand, a girl
Who waits for gentlemen to hurl
A Harris tweed across the muck
Is (sorry, baby) out of luck.

W. H. VON DREELE



"Dagnabbit!—my roll-on deodorant rolled away!"

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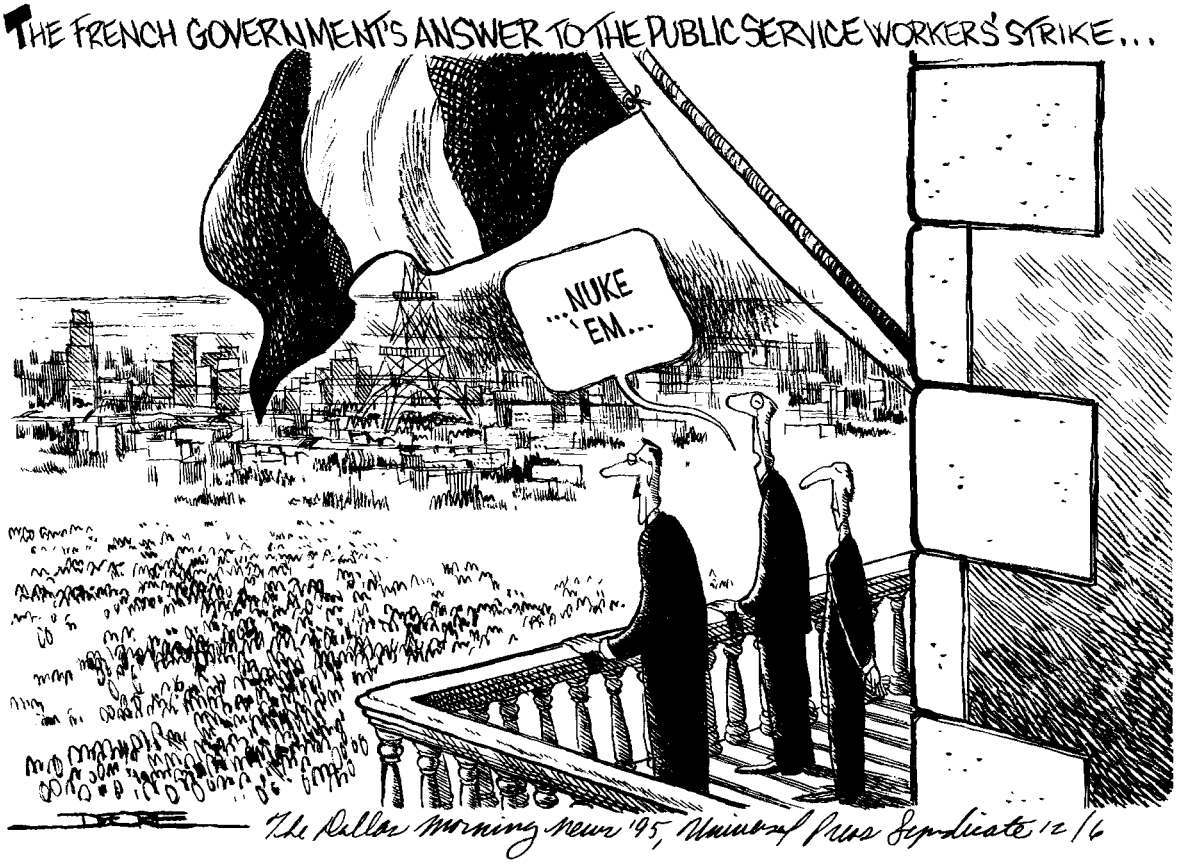
THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT'S ANSWER TO THE PUBLIC SERVICE WORKER'S STRIKE...
...NUKE 'EM...
The Dallas Morning News '95, Universal Press Syndicate 12/6

MACNELLY Chicago Tribune
GOTTA HAND IT TO THESE NON-ESSENTIAL FEDERAL WORKERS... THEY HAVE AWESOME SURVIVAL SKILLS.
DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWNS

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AS THE SPIRIT MOVES THEM

Wesley's World Revolution

Throughout the Third World and the former Communist bloc, a vibrant Protestant Christianity is radically remaking people's lives. Bureaucratic centralizers (and Cardinals) are, quite rightly, scared stiff.

DAVID MARTIN

OVER the past thirty or so years the religious map of the world has changed dramatically. In the developed West the liberal religious establishments have seen their constituencies shrink relative to those of conservative evangelicals. In the Third World, the World Council of Churches' share of the Protestant constituency has dropped, and a protean indigenous Christianity has emerged indifferent to the Western theological intelligentsia. More often than not, this shift is toward a Pentecostal faith in the gifts of the Holy Spirit—healing, tongues, exorcism, prophecy, holiness.

Overall, perhaps a quarter of a billion people are involved, making this movement comparable to the advance of a "conservative" Islam. But whereas Islam is about reintegrating whole societies behind a single religious law, this "conservative" Christianity is a fissiparous movement undermining every kind of unifying ideology. Quite soon, the forty million evangelicals who make up 10 per cent of the population of Catholic Latin America could be matched by a similar number in Communist China (though that would be no more than 3 per cent of the Chinese population). You find such movements all over non-Islamic Africa (even inside the Coptic Church); in southern India, South Korea, the Philippines, Singapore, and the Caribbean (including Cuba); and in Europe from Sicily to Kiev, with an outer ripple in Tbilisi. In our Father's house, there are many mansions—of various designs to suit the local terrain:

—Chinese evangelical Christianity keeps a low profile and is most often found in "house churches." It is local, autonomous, and led by lay people, including women. The take-off point for this kind of faith came in the Seventies after the Cultural Revolution managed to disperse religion in all directions through trying to eradicate it.

—In southern India, a large proportion of professing Christians now belong to activist churches with charismatic leaders. The big advantages of the new evangelical movements are their defense of a fragile but genuine Christian stake in the social order and a specifically Indian reclamation of living presences and concrete powers. By comparison, conventional religious authorities look relativistic, liberal, compromising, and weak, especially when faced with militant Hindu communalism and the very concrete powers of non-Christian deities.

—In Zimbabwe, Pentecostalism (which accounts for perhaps 10 per cent of the population) helps deal with the spiritual aftermath of the guerrilla war. Above all it offers a way forward for aspiring young men and women in their struggle with Zimbabwe's traditional patriarchal cults. Women especially benefit because they suffer most from witchcraft accusations; if actually involved in witchcraft, they can have recourse to exorcism and confession and be restored to full acceptability. They also benefit because most Pentecostals employ Western medicine and spiritual healing together, and because they carry out a rigorous attack on beer, tobacco, and male rampage.

—Somehow one would not expect Hungary to be host to a major incursion of evangelical religion. Budapest in particular is too sleek and sumptuous with its wide boulevards and Art Nouveau atmosphere. But the Faith Church there is now accepted as the fourth largest religious group in the country. What this group shows is the ability of a version of charismatic Christianity to adapt to professional middle-class milieux and to operate in the drug culture with a Christian simulacrum of the high-tech vibrant style of the rock concert. The Faith Church is a mega-

Dr. Martin, Emeritus Professor of Sociology at the London School of Economics, is the author of Tongues of Fire: The Explosion of Protestantism in Latin America.

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church on the same model you find in Dallas, Akron, and Atlanta, and all over Latin America from Guatemala City to Buenos Aires.

—The Faith Church reminds one in particular of the Renascer Church in São Paulo, Brazil, where converts from the drug culture use Christian rock to convert others from that culture.

—There is apparently a complete Pentecostal village in Moldavia. It sounds unlikely, but if you have encountered a Presbyterian village under the hot sun of the Yucatan, you are prepared to believe it. (One Orthodox priest even complained to me of a village with a dangerously critical mass of Jehovah's Witnesses.)

—At the other end of Rumania, Oradea, near the Hungarian border, has the largest Baptist Church in Europe, holding three thousand. It opened last February to Handelian Hallelujahs and a British diplomatic presence. Second Baptist, Oradea, abuts a Baptist Institute of higher education with hundreds of students. You can see the future by listening to the offerings of the music department under its young American director. The young people in the choir not only render evangelical anthems but can give very respectable accounts of Schütz or Bach, Haydn, Fauré, or Brahms. In them you see the same extending ladder of cultural competence you find all over Latin America. Reading the Bible leads on to literature in general, sermonizing leads on to argumentation, popular Christian music to Johann Sebastian Bach.

Reading the Bible leads on to literature in general, sermonizing leads on to argumentation, and popular Christian music to Johann Sebastian Bach.

But that is where the danger lies. Drain can follow gain and C. S. Lewis can lead to *Les Fleurs du Mal*. A student who brought back Derrida from London University was told by one irate listener that he had had enough enforced lack of communication under Ceausescu to put up with the idea that coherent meaning was impossible anyway. At the same time, the intelligence, commitment, and energy of these students put the products of many prestigious Western universities to shame.

In Rumania, and for that matter in Korea, Brazil, and Nigeria, the volcanic action of evangelical churches throws up underground strata and exposes to view human potentialities buried for centuries. Humble people appear on stage for the first time as public actors. (Modern means of communication help. Evangelical religion has a special affinity for modern technology, which can receive messages and amplify them. Evangelists enjoy amplification even if some of their neighbors are less well pleased.) All this is exposing to view a buried intelligentsia—and one not yet affected by Western lassitude and relativism.

THE religious premise to which evangelicals adhere is that human beings universally have "no power of themselves to help themselves" when it comes to the one thing necessary. The poor, who lack entanglement in the false supports provided by "the world," are especially open to this truth (just as the Gospel itself makes clear), but once it is accepted in the heart with a repudiation of the past, all things become possible in the strength of God. Everything else is "added to them," which means superabundance of spiritual gifts, but this also (as they themselves observe) often incidentally includes betterment in every sphere, including the material.

These people change themselves or rather seek to be changed, and it is precisely this beginning in the personal sphere that is so powerful. It means that even from the external observer's standpoint, poor people are able in some degree to change their circumstances. Pentecostalism is an option of the poor rather than the liberationist "option *for* the poor." This is not to say that a community of faith comes into being because it offers a tactic for survival. But when people rope themselves together on very slippery slopes—when they maintain disciplines, respect priorities, husband the emotional and other capital sunk into their families, and above all have a God-given validation of the value of their own lives and persons—then their life chances are genuinely enhanced.

Your life comes to be valued through the experience of being personally delivered in the core of your being. That is what is meant by the familiar phrase about responding to a "personal Saviour"—a God who is likewise "personal" and "in all points as you are."

Persons are not only affirmed as persons, moreover, but called upon to make judgments about themselves and about their own lives. By extension they are encouraged to make their own judgments in each and every sphere. Once that is established as the premise of your existence, you cannot shuffle everything sideways onto circumstances (the things that "stand around") or view yourself solely as victim rather than also as agent. It is just when your circumstances are most severely limiting that you need to know yourself as agent; otherwise you will be passively swept over the abyss.

The phrase "forgive us our debts" resonates with special power wherever people are enmeshed in every kind of bondage and indebtedness. If in the past you violated your own self or haplessly cooperated in its violation, you are cut free from that entanglement. And you are set on a narrow path to betterment by being freely accepted by others who also share the goal of improving themselves and their "lot."

TO MOST people in the professional and political classes of Western society a direct address of this kind, person to person, means something rather different from what it means in Latin America or Africa. In the Western middle classes it is resented as an attempt to colonize intimate space. But to those who have never heard their name spoken before it is like the first touch wakening them from centuries-long sleep. They have heard their name "spoken in the great congregation," and so they repeat those formulae about the receipt of a new Spirit over and over again like besotted lovers to affirm and confirm their happiness.

For such people the primary need is not to be in-

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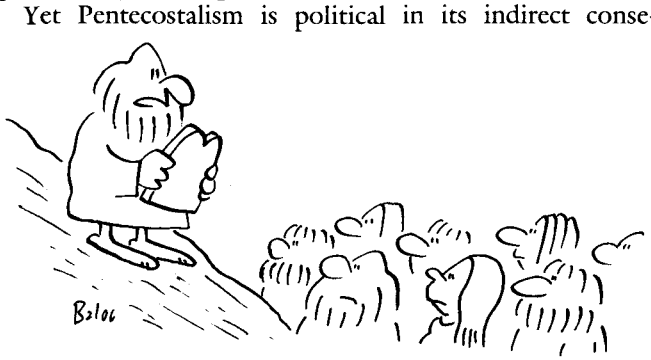
trigued, amused, or diverted, or even to demonstrate capacity in some respected role. All these things belong to "the world." They are "what the Gentiles seek after," whether it is football, beer, sex, or television. The deep need remains to be touched in your heart and to celebrate that touch. To be converted there relieves one of the need to be diverted elsewhere. Indeed, it leads to the suspicion that diversion as such is contrary to conversion and so—by another incidental consequence—ensures that you are a committed student or a persistent worker. You don't waste your time but, as the Puritans used to say, you redeem it. You might even end up by being punctual.

The formulae of salvation are Biblical, and so Pentecostals and evangelicals speak a "language of Zion." This is almost a patois or secret tongue, and it helps seal the group against the outside. The Bible is of supreme importance partly because it carries awesome authority even in the outside world, and partly because the believers are those who alone have divined its inner meaning. Other people may have a nodding acquaintance with it, but they are its intimates. What had been an object of deferential genuflection carried in priestly solemnity becomes a personal possession, thumbed and worn to shreds. When they defend the Bible it is less on account of its literal truth and what observers label "fundamentalism" than because for them it is the bearer of good and perfect gifts.

Believers hold conversations with God and the Biblical characters "as a man speaks to his familiar friends." The saints vacate their plinths in Baroque space and walk the streets as fellow artisans. And just as "redeeming the time" might end up in punctuality, so responding to the power of the Word ends up in increasing your word power. The volumes next to the Bible on the shelf are the commentary and the dictionary. The cultus broadens out into a culture.

Evangelical language, because directed from persons to persons, differs from any political language based on a collectivist rhetoric of the masses or "the People." It therefore bypasses politics as the main highway to dignity and worth. Change is not postponed to the Day of the Revolution, but is available here and now. It is political salvation that is perceived as "pie in the sky." Above all, religious exhortation is not a call to collective agents to mobilize "forces" but a call to personal agents to practice peaceability and acquire a new reformed temper.

Yet Pentecostalism is political in its indirect consequences. Evangelicals can approve of themselves, and feel they are accorded a wider social approval, because they are "laborers worthy of their hire." The world out there may be bemused by their "bizarre" practices but it respects their sobriety and reliability. The mistress of the Catholic household approves of her evangelical domestics because they work by inner conviction and will not invite male companions in to plunder the household. The owner of a small business feels the same. Firms beyond a dozen or so workers depend upon trust, conscience, and conscientiousness. Even when society's attention to you is negative, it can be handled in a language of suffering readily available from the New Testament. "Rejoice and be glad when everyone speaks against you."



"No, it's definitely not *a living document."*

To be sure, the sense of self-worth builds up into a certain pride which can eventually lead to self-advertisement and unctuous righteousness. Since the seventeenth century, Protestant piety has attracted satire on this account, from Ben Jonson in *The Alchemist* to George Eliot and Anthony Trollope. But it is very understandable when those who live out their lives in narrow rooms look around their church and feel that this is something they have created and can be proud of. They gave the donations or even helped in the building itself. A woman looking around at the assembled faces of her sisters, many of whom were once abandoned or abused, feels that this is redemption not only from hell but from a social abyss. The pastor who dug the ditches for the lavatories with his own hands knows that this is the Lord's doing—and his own. In these circumstances, wearing your best clothes to church is an act of respect for what has been granted rather than a claim to status.

Most Pentecostals have come in from the margins and now know themselves to stand on the right side of a line approved by God—*not* by society. They were "put right" by God *alone* and they feel (and are) "good" as they stand respectable and decently suited outside their chapel at the end of the service and shake the pastor's hand. This is the chatter and banter of those who have crossed from death to life. Unless you understand the way divine validation literally and psychically turns people around you cannot understand what is going on at all.

THE best vantage point for appreciating the strengths and weaknesses, achievements and blunders of Pentecostalism and conservative evangelicalism is in the pastorates and the lay leadership. Anyone can aspire to lead and serve. Pastors and lay preachers mostly lack formal training; "The Lord gave the Word," and a company of preachers sprang up validated by the Spirit. They are, therefore, on the same level with others they meet in their daily life, not distanced by long periods of professional training and learning. The lay missionaries, whether men or women, preaching in the street know the conditions of those they preach to, and take their stories and illustrations from shared experience.

The Latin American pastor speaks "with authority," partly no doubt because that is the local cultural style, but fundamentally because the right to speak is validated "by divine permission." This offers a route to a certain

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amount of abuse, because power issuing from the mouth can easily go to the head, and because those who have been subject to the will of others may in turn try to subject others to their will. Once you open up leadership to "unlearned and ignorant men" you have simultaneously increased equality and opened up opportunities for the raw exercise of charismatic potency. Certainly the Word that such people deliver is not tentative and non-judgmental suggestion. It is exhortation and excoriation. Pastors talk from the heart to the heart, and have no truck with exegetical footnoting. This kind of leadership demands a great deal of personal discipline, and it requires discipline from its hearers "bringing into subjection" the unruly and wasteful affections of the heart.

Some of these pastors are, "in their generation," real renaissance men. Call up on your mental screen the figure of a canny five-foot preacher in rural Chile, with the features of the Aymara people and a face as lined as a dry river bed. He has been a flyweight boxer and left-wing political organizer. Now he is architect, builder, acupuncturist, journalist, broadcaster, and choir master. To teach his children's choir he has worked out the language of music on his own by moving up and down the staves from middle C. He knows exactly when and where to help miracles happen. He tells you he has outfaced a lion in the Andes in the power of the Lord, just like little David, the Shepherd-King. He is not one to concede advantages to his opponents. As he commented about his old boxing days, "Did not the Lord say, 'It is better to give than to receive'?"

You can see such people all over the expanding evangelical world, often burly, square-jawed, and beetle-browed. They are God's salesmen with noses to the grindstone, exuding an Edwardian confidence and assurance.

Another pastor interviewed me (rather than the other way round) and illustrated nearly every proposition in Max Weber's *Protestant Ethic* in nearly two hours' unstoppable exposition. It was time, he said, the Hispanic world showed the energy of the Japanese, the Germans, and the Americans. His social work was to help ensure that social workers would have no clients needing help. He had applied to the Rockefeller Foundation to help establish a technological institution. If you wanted humanist education, that was available at the Catholic Pontifical University. "I want skills for my people." The books on his shelves told the same story. They were tools for the job.

It is clear enough why such people are not the favorites of the broadsheets. One journalist asked me why they had such a bad press and I explained that with a well-educated Jesuit you had a better class of conversation plus a decent bottle of wine. It echoes the complaint Dr. Johnson made about John Wesley: he just will not sit down and cross his legs for a chat.

The striking thing is the wide range of Pentecostal and conservative evangelical advance. The mainstream versions are represented by large churches like the Assemblies of God, in Brazil, or the Methodist Pentecostal Church, in Chile. But apart from these giants there are myriads of tiny groups, some no more than a single home or a shack attached to a home. The suburb of La Pintana in Santiago is honeycombed with these, and so are the hills above Tijuana in Baja California. They are built by the very poor for themselves and whoever will join them. They have names like Voice in the Desert or Prince of Peace. Inside them, the pastor speaks from a makeshift podium only a few feet from the chicken run, while his wife may preach in the street when the children emerge from school.

The buried intelligentsia has also created and fostered somewhat syncretic "deviations" like the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God, in Brazil, or The Light of the World, in Mexico. Both have a million or two adherents, with branches in the United States, and seem to have a special appeal to non-Hispanic peoples. The Universal Church takes over or erects structures opening onto the street and nightly offers exorcisms or healings. The Light of the World, dating from between the wars, has created in Guadalajara a fantastic temple holding thousands; it is partly New Jerusalem and partly a kind of Ethiopian and Judaic reworking of themes from buried layers of the Mexican psyche.

Finally, there are the megachurches with their all-inclusive facilities, their ministerial management themes, their sometimes professional clientele, and their excursions into Christian rock and against the drug culture. The variety is almost infinite, but the messages retain their family likeness.

WE COME finally to the issue of the political impact of conservative evangelical Christianity. Such movements help erode all-embracing systems, whether in politics or in religion, and can best be understood through two frameworks. One is Halévy's argument that evangelical conversion assists peaceful cultural evolution rather than violent revolutionary upheaval. The other is Tocqueville's argument about the way voluntary religious organizations build up "social capital" through networks between the state and the individual. In that sense it is a political act simply to create a layer of institutions which could be integrated into an emerging civil society. Likewise it is a political act to establish a free space and to create models of self-government and participation with a flat hierarchy of management.

"If things don't go right, I'll be joining you in a few minutes."

At a rather different level, conservative evangelicalism in Latin America pursues an implicit cultural politics because it is dedicated to both personal and social peaceability. The taming of the macho personality is all of a piece with the rejection of the romanticism of violence and the role of the guer-

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rilla. Conservative evangelicalism has very restricted ambitions with regard to the state, and it has no theory of forcible change designed to overthrow state structures. It desires in every sense to live and let live, and so it can only advance by the peaceable slow stain of cultural implication—and even then not by direct intention but through the incidental consequences of disciplined faith.

That free space of evangelical activity may pick up many different kinds of social alignment which it then remolds in its own image. For example, free space may appeal to many of those most exposed to capitalistic social relations and accelerate that exposure, or, alternatively, it may take those threatened by the advent of such relations and throw around them a protective cordon. It may assist local workers in defending themselves against exploitative middlemen, or alternatively it may bolster the ambitions of those who would act as negotiators and brokers between the locality and the wider world. Where the social world is heaving and cracking with seismic fissures the lava of faith travels in many directions.

Morally, evangelicals may be conservative, but sociologically they are one of the forward sectors of radical social change, above all because they help along the fragmentation of an inclusive religious hegemony. Evangelical religion, particularly in Latin America, replicates the differentiations long ago achieved in Anglo-American society —is there some connection between the world-wide spread of English and the world-wide spread of evangelicalism?—whereby religion does not have to be political (i.e., at the core of the *polis*) but can achieve its influence through culture, including the cultural margin. This further implies that evangelicals will not seek, as would "fundamentalist Muslims," to replace one hegemony with another. There will never come a time when the evangelical government of, say, Ecuador imposes the regulations of Deuteronomy on the whole society and abolishes the fiesta and Mardi Gras.

So far as any explicit political alignments of evangelicals are concerned, these are quite varied, though concentrated in the Center and Center–Right. Clearly their whole ethos makes it unlikely that they will ally themselves with Marxist or Catholic parties. But there are other avenues. Evangelicals have now entered politics in Colombia, pressing for equal rights, and they were a significant force in the initial stages of Cambio 90, which brought Fujimori to power in Peru. The Faith Church in Hungary has well-publicized links with the government through highly placed members of the free-market neo-liberal party, and though it has no official political line, the atmosphere is of the social market: pro-capitalist but against "wild" capitalism. (Not surprisingly, its literature includes authors promoting a "prosperity gospel"; presumably there is enough prosperity and enough hope in Budapest to make it plausible.) The only countries where evangelicals have entered politics on a largish scale are Brazil and Guatemala; in the former, they were afraid of the advance of militant secularism and voted 70 to 30 against the Left. But there has been disillusionment over the behavior of some evangelical deputies, and their representation dropped by a third in a more recent election. It seems that the evangelicals' fear of corruption—and of being drawn into it—was well founded.

WHERE, then, does this leave the mainstream Christian bodies, especially the Roman Catholic Church with its constituency of nearly a billion souls? The quick answer is: alarmed. My wife and I attended as consultants a conference in New York between evangelicals and members of the U.S. Catholic hierarchy designed to arrive at "rules of engagement" between the two. Clearly, insofar as all kinds of hegemony and authority are under threat (and not only from Pentecostalism), Catholicism is shaken. But a tree does not fall because it bends. For one thing, it is possible for Catholicism and evangelicalism to expand together, as they are said to do in Cuba and Guatemala. The huge new basilica built between São Paulo and Rio, with its Bernini-like embrace of all the world, hardly symbolizes a church that has lost its confidence. For another, there are parts of the world, such as central Africa and South Korea, where Catholicism is making rapid progress. It is a truism that vast counter-movements like the Reformation expand rapidly and then reach a plateau before receding. You have only to look at the forlorn chapels of Bethesda or Bethania in North Wales to read that lesson. Contemporary evangelicalism has not yet reached a plateau, but there is quite a lot of evidence of a revolving door whereby many who enter soon come out again. The Parable of the Sower applies sociologically.

There are two considerations worth remembering. First, much of what is found in Pentecostalism also exists in Catholicism. Recourse to healing is only one example. Concrete powers also existed in Catholicism, until downgraded by the pale cast of abstraction. A quite different example is provided by a reading of *Rerum Novarum*, the papal encyclical of 1891. The economic ethos recommended there sounds startlingly like what is practiced among today's evangelicals. When the Chilean bishops recently expressed anxiety about "moral anarchy," the people most inclined to share it were the Pentecostals, only followed by Catholic laymen.

As the evidence abundantly suggests, vast movements outside the established churches are echoed inside them. To listen to a young Catholic evangelist of "New Evangelization 2000" is to hear a vocabulary and experience virtually identical to that of Pentecostals, apart from references to the Pope and the Blessed Virgin. It is not at all likely that Catholicism will incorporate "Pentecost" all along the line, but it will and does include it. Eighteenth-century evangelicalism and later revivalism fed personnel back over generations into the established bodies; the same process could occur again. If you pursue the genealogies of Anglican hierarchs, they often lead back to enthusiastic lay dissenters who were part of some English (or Welsh) "buried intelligentsia."

Perhaps a future archbishop of Jalisco, Mexico, flourishing c. 2070 A.D., will, instead of anathematizing Protestantism as the third party in a malign trinity along with drugs and pornography, reminisce fondly about the sterling qualities of his Pentecostal grandparents. □

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SELLING AMERICA SHORT

Robert Reich Wages War

President Clinton's Labor Secretary is advancing a theory of class warfare. Democrats hope that the message will take.

RAMESH PONNURU

IN THE 1980s, Robert Reich was tossing out politically marketable policy proposals like a salad shooter. The quixotic task he had assigned himself—devising an economic agenda for liberals—would require several trips back to the drawing board. But in 1992 his efforts paid off, when his old friend and fellow Rhodes scholar Bill Clinton incorporated many of his ideas about government investments in people in his platform, Putting People First. At the Democratic National Convention that year, the late journalist Andrew Kopkind overheard someone remark, "The only point of this campaign is to put somebody in the Oval Office who will put Robert Reich in the basement."

Instead, Reich was put in charge of the Department of Labor. It's not normally considered a plum job, but he has raised its profile higher than ever before. His Republican predecessors, Elizabeth Dole and Lynn Martin, never pretended to be economic heavyweights. Reich, by contrast, is constantly explaining the larger meaning of economic trends. "He and Laura Tyson are the two most widely quoted representatives of the Administration on economic affairs," says Princeton economics professor Harvey Rosen. Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin's public remarks tend to concern the bond market. Nobody ever heard from Roger Altman when he headed the National Economic Council, and nobody's ever heard *of* Council of Economic Advisors chairman Joseph Stiglitz.

The emphasis Clinton places on protecting spending for education and training programs reflects the influence of Reich's ideas. His primary function for the Administration, however, is not so much to make policy as to be an articulate spokesman for the Left. Michael Horowitz, an old Washington hand now at the Hudson Institute, says, "He is a spectacular propagandist. Nobody's better than Reich at agitprop in this Administration." Reich is the Dan Quayle of the Clinton Administration: while others (in this case, centrists like Rubin and Leon Panetta) shape its basic agenda, he mobilizes its base and creates its campaign themes.

In a Democratic Administration, of course, mobilizing the base means pleasing the labor movement. One of the Administration's first acts was to revoke President Bush's executive order implementing the *Beck* decision, in which the Supreme Court ruled that workers could get back union dues used for political activity rather than collective bargaining. In the last Congress, Reich pushed unsuccessfully for an expansion of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's regulatory powers over the workplace and for a ban on the permanent replacement of strikers. Having failed to deliver—and having bucked labor on NAFTA—the Administration has to try especially hard to keep the unions happy. Reich has tight links to organized labor. Steven Rosenthal, his associate deputy secretary, recently went to work for AFL-CIO head John Sweeney as his political director. Says one Labor Department official of his superiors, "They sort of treat labor the way one treats a mistress. They give them favors, but not in public."

By staying in permanent campaign mode, Reich has landed in hot water more than once. The first incident occurred in March 1993, when the new Administration was trying to get Congress to enact an economic stimulus package. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) was about to release data showing high job growth in February, which

"First of all, a master's thesis should never start out, 'Return with us now to those thrilling days of yesteryear.'"

Mr. Ponnuru is NR*'s political reporter.*

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would have weakened the case for that package. So on the morning the data were to be released, Reich held a press conference explaining that 90 per cent of the new jobs were part-time jobs for people seeking full-time work. In fact, that statistic was purely the invention of the chief economist's office, a Reich innovation run by his appointee. In April, Sylvia Nasar wrote in the *New York Times* that Reich's dissemination of the 90 per cent statistic had "created a furor among the department's career economists and statisticians" and quoted private economists criticizing Reich for spinning the data.

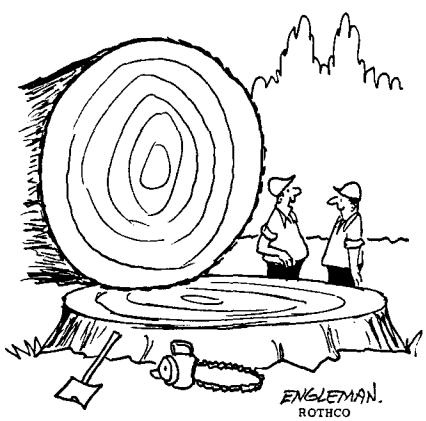
AFTER the election of the Republican Congress in 1994, Reich organized a "central oversight group" to coordinate the Labor Department's response to expected congressional hearings and proposals. The group may have broken the law by using civil servants to mount a political defense of the Administration. "Agency defense teams" were assigned to "identify major DOL actions which could be raised (both negative for defense against questions and positive for use by Secretary as examples)." The central oversight team was supposed to think of ways "to get support . . . on the nightly news or in the print media," to "Establish air tight rational [*sic*] for vulnerable programs and policies," and to "Develop allies to assist you for the oversight hearings. . . . Recruit them from the staff ranks on the Hill as well as from the diverse constituencies we work with."

After word of this effort leaked to the *Washington Post*, Sen. Connie Mack (R., Fla.), chairman of the Joint Economic Committee (JEC), wrote to Reich expressing concern over the central oversight group—and particularly the inclusion in the group of the BLS, which is widely respected for its nonpartisanship. (One Labor Department official says of the oversight group, "The purpose of this activity was clearly some kind of anti-congressional effort, and that's not what the BLS is about.") In his response to Mack, Reich wrote, "There is no actual memorandum to anyone on this subject. There is also no memorandum providing 'political direction' to the BLS or any of its employees."

Not so. When Rep. Jim Saxton (R., N.J.), vice-chairman of the JEC, requested that the BLS turn over all documents pertaining to its involvement in the group, the BLS provided memoranda from the central oversight group. Labor Department spokesmen tried to maintain that the documents were "working papers," not memos. Republicans didn't buy it. So far, Reich has seen no need to explain himself or apologize to members of Congress.

Reich raised eyebrows again in June, when the chief economist's office announced that wages had declined by a huge 2.3 per cent over the last year. Reich told Keith Bradsher of the *New York Times* that it put Republican tax proposals "in a very different light," and the story was widely reported. Yet it wasn't true. The statistic was derived from a BLS survey that compares wages and fringe benefits at a single point in time. Because of the way the BLS changes the mix of occupations surveyed each year, year-to-year comparisons can't be made. By doing so, anyway, Reich presented several years' worth of economic shifts as if they had all taken place in one year. In September, the JEC issued a press release making these points, but so far none of the newspapers that ran the original story has corrected the record.

Ohio University economist Richard Vedder mentioned the JEC release in a *Washington Times* op-ed disputing Reich's account of wage decline. Reich's response was revealing. First, he asserted that the JEC "has been proven flatly wrong" without providing any citation; second, he denied that he had ever argued that average earnings were declining—he was concerned with inequality. In fact, the JEC had checked its release for factual and analytical soundness with BLS officials, and officials at both agencies are unaware of any attempt to respond to it. Reich's claim never to have argued that average wages were declining is simply untrue. The 2.3 per cent statistic that sparked the controversy, for instance, was supposedly an average.



"We've taken the first step toward starting a new magazine."

Perhaps it is possible to defend or excuse Reich on any one of these incidents—he probably took more flak than he deserved in the first case—but taken together, they add up to a troubling pattern. Reich's books and articles have long been notorious for their cavalier approach to facts. His record in office suggests that more than mere sloppiness is at work. Mark Wilson, who left a career civil-service job in the Labor Department for the Heritage Foundation in early 1995, declares, "The work is done very carefully, and I think they selectively take the statistics that advance their agenda." Like the President he serves, Reich seems to think he can remake reality with his utterances. It would be an endearing habit if some people, including the press corps, didn't take him seriously.

REICH'S latest big idea is sure to be taken seriously in next year's presidential race. It is that shrinking wages and growing inequality are America's central social problems. Cultural conservatism and anti-government sentiment, in Reich's view, are symptoms of this underlying economic malady. (This type of thinking is a hoary staple of Left political analysis.) Reich is an effective spokesman for this viewpoint. House Minority Whip David Bonior takes a similar line, but he projects resentment of the successful. Reich is the Happy Class Warrior. One Hill aide predicts that "Reich is going to have an autonomous role in nailing down the base, the unions, while the main campaign will try to position Clinton as a New Democrat." The emphasis on wages also dovetails nicely with Reich's "investment" agenda. If wages are stagnant, the way to get them rising again is to invest in improving skills so that more high-wage jobs can be created.

The Left hasn't always liked to hear this message: it sounded too much like blaming the working poor for not having enough skills. The tone of Clintonite liberalism—defending government programs with the language of efficiency rather than of old-Left moralism, with talk of "human capital" rather than of human happiness—can also grate on traditional leftists (among others). Culturally, Reich has more in com-

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mon with New Democrats than with the labor Left.

But in the current political context, progressives are glad that someone on the national stage is talking about inequality, class, and "corporate welfare." According to Robert Borosage, a longtime Jesse Jackson advisor now at the Campaign for New Priorities, "Progressives generally think of Reich as the voice they've had in the Administration both in raising corporate welfare and in terms of caring about workers whose wages are declining, raising questions about inequality." Many of them believe that the corporate-welfare and wage issues add up to a political strategy that could revive their movement.

BOTH issues have political drawbacks, though. Soon after the 1994 elections, Reich challenged Republicans and conservative think tanks to support cuts in subsidies to business. The GOP old guard largely muffed the challenge, but so did Democrats. "It's the Clinton Administration defending corporate welfare," argues Stephen Moore, fiscal-policy analyst at the Cato Institute, citing the Administration's defense of the Energy Department and "the Department of Corporate Welfare" (also known as the Commerce Department). "Even some of the programs Reich likes are corporate welfare." Subsidizing corporate training programs, for instance, is a major item on Reich's agenda. Reich once championed industrial policy, the theoretical underpinning for corporate welfare.

On wages, too, Reich's political message may prove difficult to get across. He wants simultaneously to convince voters that the economy is chugging along thanks to Administration policies and that wages are shrinking. "Why would the Clinton Administration want to badmouth the economy?" asks Alan Reynolds, an economist at the Hudson Institute. "His people are out there saying, 'We're doing a terrible job.' " (Of course, some Republicans will be tempted to respond to Reich with a message—it's a weak recovery, but there's no wage problem—that could also be a hard sell.)

Whatever the politics, is Reich's economic analysis of trends over the last two decades accurate? It's hard to say, because Reich conflates several distinct issues. At various times he has argued or implied that returns to capital have increased at the expense of returns to labor; that workers' wages have lagged behind their productivity; that wage or income inequality is increasing; that median or average wages are declining; and that median family incomes are declining. (The average wage is the sum of all wages divided by the number of wage-earners; the median wage is defined by the fact that half of all workers make more and half make less.)

Reich's assertion that profits are rising while wages are declining as a proportion of national income is based on recent data. But as Professor Vedder points out, one would expect profits to rise as a proportion of national income "in the mid-to-late boom period of a business cycle." The expansion of capital is why the boom continues and wages increase. Vedder adds that if every single dollar in post-tax profits were given to workers (which would be economically disastrous) wages would rise by less than 10 per cent. "He's clueless about the role of profits in a modern economy. Profits are the engine of growth." Reich's case is not helped by the fact that profits as a share of GDP have *declined*, not increased, over the decades wages are said to have stagnated; the ratio of wages to profits has increased.

"(An) incendiary thesis...

that separate races of human beings evolved different reproductive strategies to cope with different environments..."
—Malcolm W. Browne, *New York Times Book Review*

"Describes hundreds of studies worldwide that show a consistent pattern of human racial differences."
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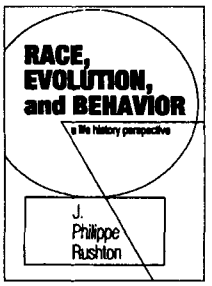
—Chris Brand, *Personality and Individual Differences*



Race, Evolution, and Behavior

J. Philippe Rushton

Why are the races different? How different are they? This book examines genetic theories to overturn the prevailing view that if all people were treated the same, most race differences would disappear. Rushton examines international data on over 60 variables, including brain size, intelligence, crime, and sexual behavior, and finds that Asians and Africans average at opposite ends of a continuum with Europeans intermediate.

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Reich cites the decline of median family income from 1979 to 1993 as evidence that "[t]he typical American family is living on less than it did 15 years ago," thus discrediting the Reagan record and, by extension, current Reaganite proposals. Again, Reich's use of statistics conceals at least as much as it reveals. He includes the disastrous last year of the Carter Administration in his indictment of Republican economic policies. The same Census Bureau data he uses show that real median family income increased by 13 per cent from 1982 to 1989 (the years between Reagan's tax cut and Bush's tax hike).

Furthermore, wage figures don't include fringe benefits like health care, 401(k) plans, and the like, which have been a growing proportion of total compensation. Median compensation statistics are not available, but averages are. The inclusion of fringe benefits makes a major difference in these averages: while average wages have declined 13.5 per cent in constant dollars from 1973 to 1994, average compensation has increased 9.6 per cent—roughly in line with average productivity. Presumably including fringe benefits would cause median figures to perk up too. (On the other hand, government policies mandate or encourage many of these fringe benefits, so their value to workers may be less than their cost.)

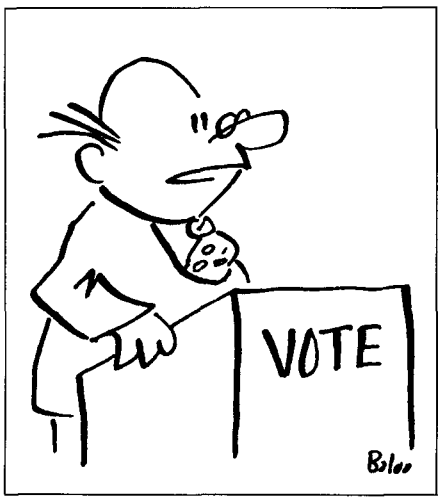
In addition, official wage and compensation figures are widely acknowledged to overestimate inflation over this period. When the consumer price index is adjusted, compensation growth looks much better. Finally, Vedder, like many conservative and libertarian economists, argues that "the best measure of people's material welfare is not their income, it's their consumption, what they feel they can purchase." Per-capita consumption increased a whopping 40 per cent in real terms between 1973 and 1994.

REICH'S point about inequality is harder to dismiss. Economists who have looked into the matter agree that wage and income inequality has been increasing for at least two decades. However, inequality of consumption is much lower, and income mobility remains high. The growth of household inequality also may be an inevitable corollary to the growth of single-parent households and two-earner families. Reich deserves credit, however, for focusing public attention on the circumstances of low-wage workers. Many right-wing economists agree on the need to improve the education and skills of the work force.

Where Reich goes wrong is on public-policy solutions to the problem. High on his agenda is "investment" in federal job-training programs. But these programs do not appear to increase long-term hourly earnings significantly, according to the few rigorous evaluations that have been conducted. In a controlled study, participants in summer-jobs programs, which Reich criticizes congressional Republicans for cutting, showed no higher rates of work or graduation than non-participants. For much of the target group, the government could accomplish more by easing minimum-wage and child-labor laws. Some programs have negative effects on participants' employment prospects.

Reich has proposed imposing a 1.5 per cent payroll tax to finance training programs. It's a bit perverse to increase payroll taxes as part of a program to raise wages and create jobs, since such taxes rather obviously subvert both objectives. Alan Reynolds argues strenuously that the prospect of high taxes in general reduces the incentive for workers to spend the time and money to improve their own skills.

A more direct approach to raising unskilled workers' wages, also favored by Reich, is to increase the minimum wage. That would kill jobs, according to a longstanding consensus among economists. But Reich entered office touting a study claiming that the minimum wage did not cause job loss, and could even create jobs. Then the Employment Policies Institute discredited the study by exposing its sloppy construction.



"I have no plans to lie to you at this time."

More reliable data vindicated the conventional view. The Administration has retreated to the position that "over a dozen" studies show that raising the minimum wage has an insignificant effect on jobs. Carlos Bonilla, the EPI's chief economist, refuted these studies convincingly: those that supported the administration were not well constructed or based on adequate data, those that were properly done didn't support it. One study, for instance, dealt with high-wage industries unlikely to be much affected by a minimum-wage increase.

Perhaps Reich's worst proposal is "economically targeted investment" (ETI). Radicals have long advocated directing trillions of dollars in pension funds to sectors of the economy deemed socially beneficial, like low-income housing. It's a way to extend control over the economy even in an era of fiscal retrenchment. The idea was one of the central planks of Jesse Jackson's 1988 campaign. By 1992, it had made its way, in a veiled form, into Putting People First. The Labor Department has cautiously advanced this agenda under Reich, issuing a bulletin in 1994 to show that ETIs were consistent with existing pension law (which directs pension-fund managers to maximize returns and minimize risks) and establishing an information clearinghouse to facilitate ETIs. If, as Reich claims, ETIs are prudent investments that happen to have beneficial side-effects, the private sector should already be making them. More likely, ETIs would yield substandard returns, threatening pensioners and taxpayers alike. "They're basically using middle-class financial assets as a leftish sandbox for all their pet projects," says Chris Frenze of the Joint Economic Committee.

Distrust of Reich is now "pervasive" among Republicans, says one congressional aide. Rep. Peter Hoekstra (R., Mich.), chairman of the relevant oversight subcommittee, is heading several investigations of the Labor Department. The latest target of congressional inquiry is Reich's conduct during the November partial government shutdown, when he furloughed 90 per cent of OSHA workers and issued a statement saying that OSHA would be unable to prevent tragedies in the workplace. If that were true, the Anti-deficiency Act (which prohibits the suspension of federal activities necessary to protect lives and property) would have mandated that they not be fur-

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loughed. "This was Bob Reich not thinking, and seeing an opportunity to have a press conference," sighs one Labor Department official.

Hoekstra is pressing Reich to respond to allegations that a high-ranking department official tried to coerce an ununionized company into signing a collective-bargaining agreement by putting pressure on one of its biggest clients. The Labor Department's temporary establishment of a toll-free hotline workers could call to learn how a higher minimum wage would improve their lives (!) is among the many other issues the subcommittee is examining. Committee staffers complain that the department has been remarkably uncooperative. Says one, "We have reports that this is being systematically done and that this is . . . very intentional."

Reich's reign has taken a toll on employees in the Labor Department. Republican cutbacks and being labeled "nonessential workers" have disconcerted many workers throughout the Federal Government, but sources in the department argue that morale had declined before the 1994 elections. Expectations were high when Reich took over, but the politicization of the department and the resulting adverse publicity and investigations disillusioned many.

So has the Administration's aggressive implementation of racial and sexual preferences. In July, Deputy Secretary Thomas Glynn announced that the department would try to maintain diversity in the face of downsizing; many white men interpret that to mean they will be laid off first. (Says Marshall Wittmann of the Heritage Foundation: "You may soon have the phenomenon of the angry white bureaucrat.") "It's a demoralized work force," says one career civil servant. Mark Wilson warns of a "serious brain drain occurring at the Department of Labor," and other current and former employees join him in worrying that the quality of the department's work will suffer. An official who has been there for more than twenty years says, "This department is in disarray. I have never seen anything like this."

Morale at the White House, on the other hand, is high. Democrats think Reich's wage story resonates, and they intend to campaign on it next year. It could work. But if liberals think Reich offers a way out of their political and intellectual morass in the long term, they may need to go back to the drawing board. □

Never Blame the Left

The Left is perceived as kind and caring, despite its extensive history of promoting genocide.

GEORGE WATSON

WHEN it comes to handing out blame, it is widely assumed that the Right is wicked and the Left incompetent. Or rather, you sometimes begin to feel, any given policy must have been Right if it was wicked, Left if it was incompetent.

To give an example: I happened recently in Vienna to pass a restaurant that was advertising Jewish food, with two armed policemen standing outside. They were there, one of them explained to me, to guard against right-wing radical extremists. There had been no violence against the restaurant then, and I believe there has been none since. But racism, and especially anti-Semitism, is wicked, so it must be right-wing.

That is fairly astounding, when you think about it. The truth is that in modern Europe, genocide has been exclusively a socialist idea, ever since Engels proclaimed it in Marx's journal the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* in January–February 1849. Ever since then everyone who has

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advocated genocide has called himself a socialist, without exception.

The Left has a lot to hide. In the 1890s, for example, French socialists dissociated themselves from the Dreyfus affair, and in January 1898 the French Socialist Party issued a manifesto that called it a power struggle within the ruling classes, and warned the workers against taking sides in the matter. Dreyfus's supporters were Jewish capitalists, they argued, eager to clear themselves of financial scandals. A few years later, in 1902, H. G. Wells in *Anticipations* repeated the Marxist demand for genocide, but with variations, since the book is a blueprint for a socialist utopia that would be exclusively white.

A generation later Bernard Shaw, another socialist, in a preface to his play *On the Rocks* (1933), called on scientists to devise a painless way of killing large multitudes of people, especially the idle and the incurable, which is where Hitler's program began six years later. In a letter to his fellow socialist Beatrice Webb (February 6, 1938) Shaw remarked of Hitler's program to exterminate the Jews that "we ought to tackle the Jewish question," which meant admitting "the right of States to make eugenic experiments by weeding out any strains that they think undesirable." His only proviso was that it should be done humanely.

Ethnic cleansing was an essential part of the socialist program before Hitler had taken any action in the matter. The Left, for a century, was proud of its ruthlessness, and scornful of the delicacy of its opponents. "You can't make an omelette," Beatrice Webb once told a visitor who had seen cattle cars full of starving people in the Soviet Union, "without breaking eggs."

There is abundant evidence, what is more, that the Nazi leaders believed they were socialists and that anti-Nazi socialists often accepted that claim. In *Mein Kampf* (1926) Hitler accepted that National Socialism was a derivative of Marxism. The point was more bluntly made in private conversations. "The whole of National Socialism is based on Marx," he told Hermann Rauschning. Rauschning later reported the remark in *Hitler Speaks* (1939), but by that time the world was at war and too busy to pay much attention to it. Goebbels too thought himself a socialist. Five days before the German invasion of the Soviet Union, in June 1941, he confided in his diary that "real socialism" would be established in that country after a Nazi victory, in place of Bolshevism and Czarism.

THE evidence that Nazism was part of the socialist tradition continues to accumulate, even if it makes no headlines. In 1978 Otto Wagener's *Hitler: Memoirs of a Confidant* appeared in its original German. Wagener was a lifelong Nazi who had died in 1971. His recollections of Hitler's conversations had been composed from notes in a British prisoner-of-war camp, and they represent Hitler as an extreme socialist utopian, anti-Jewish because "the Jew is not a socialist." Nor are Communists—"basically they are not socialistic, since they create mere herds, as in the Soviet Union, without individual life." The real task, Hitler told Wagener, was to realize the socialist dream that mankind over the centuries had forgotten, to liberate labor, and to displace the rule of capital. That sounds like a program for the Left, and many parties called socialist have believed in less.

Hitler's allegiance, even before such sources were known, was acknowledged by socialists outside Germany. Julian Huxley, for example, the pro-Soviet British biologist who later became director-general of UNESCO, accepted Hitler's claim to be a socialist in the early 1930s, though without enthusiasm (indeed, with marked embarrassment).

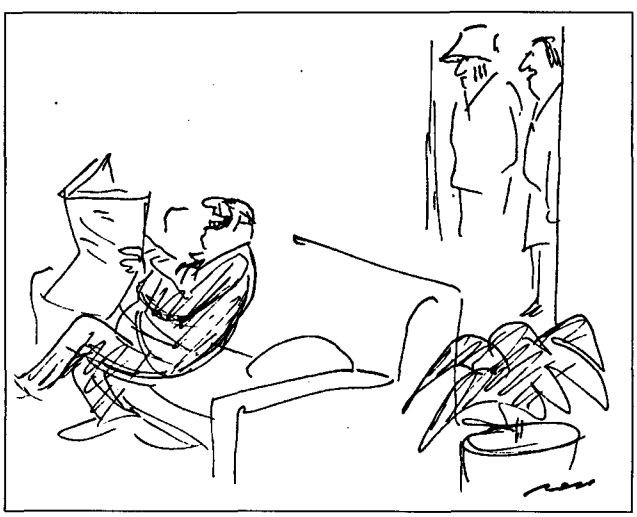
Hitler's program demanded central economic planning, which was at the heart of the socialist cause; and genocide, in the 1930s, was well known to be an aspect of the socialist tradition and of no other. There was, and is, no conservative or liberal tradition of racial extermination. The Nazis, what is more, could call on socialist practice as well as socialist theory when they invaded the Soviet Union in 1941 and began their exterminatory program. That is documented by Rudolf Hoess in his memoir *Kommandant in Auschwitz* (1958). Detailed reports of the Soviet camp system were circulated to Nazi camp commandants as a model to emulate and an example to follow.

Soviet exterminations under Lenin and Stalin may have totaled 25 to 30 million, which (if the estimate is accepted) would represent about three times the Nazi total of nine million. That seems to matter very little now. My Austrian policeman was still certain that racism is right-wing. As are a lot of people. After a recent bomb outrage against a synagogue in Lübeck, the German press instantly assumed, before anyone was charged with the crime, that the Right was to blame. The fact that there is no non-socialist tradition of genocide in Europe has not even been noticed.

That is an impressive act of suppression. The Left may have lost the political battle, almost everywhere in the world. But it does not seem to have lost the battle of ideas. In intellectual circles, at least, it is still believed that racism and the Left do not mix.

Why is this? How has the evidence of socialist genocide, how has Hitler's acknowledgment of his debt to Marx, been so efficiently suppressed?

The answer, I suspect, lies in the nature of political commitment. Political knowledge is not like botany or physics, and commitment is not usually made by examining evidence. When socialism was fashionable I used to ask those who believed in it why they thought public ownership would favor the poor. What struck me about their responses was not just that they did not know but that they did not think they were under any obligation to know. But if they had really cared about poverty they would have demanded an answer before they signed up, and would have gone on demanding an answer until they got one. In other words, they were hardly interested in solving poverty. What really in-



"Fred, being a masochist, simply revels in the news."

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terested them was looking and sounding as if they did.

When Marxism was fashionable, similarly, I used to ask Marxists what book by Marx or Engels they had read all the way through, and watch them look shifty and change the subject. Or, for a change, I might ask them what they thought of Engels's 1849 program of racial extermination, and watch them lose their temper. Politics, for lots of people, is not evidence-based. It is more like showing off a new dress or a new suit.

THERE are three motives, broadly speaking, for political commitment, of which the third is admirable. I shall leave it till last.

The first is self-definition. You call yourself Left or Right, that is, as a way of proclaiming to the world and to yourself that you are a certain sort of person—kind and caring if you are Left, competent and realistic if you are Right. The reasons for these associations of ideas are far older than our century and matter now only to historians, and even they would usually prefer not to be asked about them. It might be worrying if anyone did. The line between the efficient and the inefficient, after all, is nothing like as simple as the line between the private and the public, and not all public enterprise is caring: Auschwitz was public enterprise. Never mind. If you want to look caring, you will not ask such questions, and if anybody does it is always possible to change the subject.

The second motive is a sense of community. You choose a political side because the people you know, or would like to know, are already there, and you would like them to like you. There was a time when, in university life, you would not be accepted unless you were Left, and it took enormous courage in that age to speak out on campus against Soviet or Chinese exterminations. That view is not yet dead. There are still those on both sides of the Atlantic who move, and intend to go on moving, in circles that think anti-Americanism a sufficient substitute for connected thought.

The third motive is instrumental. You can hold a political view with the admirable purpose of achieving something specific like constitutional change or a balanced budget, and support those who support it, whatever their party color. A moment's reflection suggests that this is rare. It is hard work, for one thing. It seldom attracts admiration, for another, though it often should. And it is not always easy to believe that this will work. Much more agreeable, on the whole, to use politics as a way of defining yourself or of making and keeping friends.

The Left got away with its crimes, I suggest, because those who form opinion had their own reasons for looking in another direction. They wanted to see themselves in a certain light and to keep the good opinion of people whose friendship they valued. They had no wish to look at evidence, and they were adept at pretending, when it was produced, that it did not mean what it said. I remember once, in a controversy in a British journal, being told that Marx, Wells, and Shaw were being whimsical and nothing more when they committed socialists to mass-murder. Couldn't I take a joke? Evidence is seldom as inconvenient as that in the physical sciences, and scientists do not enjoy such convenient excuses for dismissal as whimsy or irony. Most critical theory, in our times, has been a way of pretending that evidence does not, and perhaps cannot, be taken literally.

The effects of that mood are still visible. The history of socialism, above all, is studiously neglected and even, in some aspects, simply taboo. What we need now is a serious and unblinking study of socialism, of what it said and what it did: one that does not fudge the evidence: one that is brave enough to tell it as it was. □

Is Reason Reasonable?

ARISTOTLE, THE GREATEST OF THE PAGAN PHILOSOPHERS, declared to his followers in ancient Greece that reason is the noblest aspect of man, and thought his highest activity.

Some twenty centuries later, Pascal, the extraordinary 17th-century French philosopher and mathematician, wrote an impassioned defense of feelings.

"The heart," he said, "has its reasons which reason knows nothing of. We know truth not only by reason, but also by the heart."

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Question & Answer

These student bloopers are all genuine, authentic, and unretouched. (None, of course, was written by your children–or any youngster in your school district.)

RICHARD LEDERER

IT is truly astonishing what happens to Bible stories when they are retold by young scholars around the world.

In the first book of the Bible, Guinessis, God got tired of creating the world, so he took the Sabbath off. Adam and Eve were created from an apple tree. Noah's wife was called Joan of Ark. Noah built an ark, which the animals came on to in pears. Lot's wife was a pillar of salt by day, but a ball of fire by night.

The Jews were a proud people and throughout history they had trouble with the unsympathetic Genitals. Samson was a strongman who let himself be led astray by a Jezebel like Delilah. Samson slayed the Philistines with the axe of the apostles.

Moses led the Hebrews to the Red Sea, where they made unleavened bread, which is bread made without any ingredients. The Egyptians were all drowned in the dessert. Afterward, Moses went up on Mount Cyanide to get the Ten Amendments. The First Commandment was when Eve told Adam to eat the apple. The Fifth Commandment is humor thy father and mother. The Seventh Commandment is thou shalt not admit adultery.

Moses died before he ever reached Canada. Then, Joshua led the Hebrews in the battle of Geritol. The greatest miracle in the Bible is when Joshua told his son to stand still and he obeyed him.

David was a Hebrew king skilled at playing the liar. He fought with the Finkelsteins, a race of people who lived in Biblical times. Solomon, one of David's sons, had 300 wives and 700 porcupines.

When Mary heard that she was the Mother of Jesus, she sang the Magna Carta. When the three wise guys from the East Side arrived, they found Jesus in the manager. Jesus was born because Mary had an immaculate contraption. St. John, the Blacksmith, dumped water on his head.

Jesus enunciated the Golden Rule, which says to do one to others before they do one to you. He also explained, "Man doth not live by sweat alone." It was a miracle when Jesus rose from the dead and managed to get the tomb stone off the entrance.

The people who followed the Lord were called the 12 decibels. The epistles were the wives of the apostles. One of the opossums was St. Matthew, who was by profession a taximan.

St. Paul cavorted to Christianity. He preached holy acrimony, which is another name for marriage. A Chistian should have only one wife. This is called monotony.

■ *Mount Olympus might erupt with laughter on hearing the way students describe the gods, goddesses, heroes, and heroines of ancient mythology.*

Hera had only one way to control Zeus and viewed sex as a mean of coming to an end. Vesta was a goddess who kept the home fries burning. Dionysius was the god of Rivalry. Bacchus first taught the Greeks to get drunk.

A myth is a female moth. One myth says that the mother of Achilles dipped him the River Stynx until he became intollerable. Achilles appears in *The Iliad*, by Homer. Homer also wrote *The Oddity*, in which Penelope is the last hardship that Odysseus endures on his journey. While Odysseus is off sleeping with goddesses, Penelope has to stay at home and beat off all those suitors. Odysseus has to sail between Scylla and Charybdis. Being between Scylla and Charybdis means that whichever way you go, you are going to get got.

■ *The creator of* Hamlet *was, of course, William Shakespeare. Through their bloopers, students have gone from bard to verse:*

The greatest writer of the Renaissance was William J. Shakespeare. Shakespeare was born in the year 1564, supposedly on his birthday. His father was Mr. Shakespeare, and his mother was Mrs. Shakespeare. He wrote during the era in which he lived. Actually, Shakespeare wasn't written by Shakespeare but by another man named Shakespeare.

In one of Shakespeare's famous plays, Hamlet rations out his situation by relieving himself in a long soliloquy. A soliloquy is a conversation between one person. Hamlet has an edible complex, and his mind is filled with the filth of incestuous sheets which he pours over every time he sees his mother.

In another play, Macbeth is a brave and strong man who turns bad and gradually gets worse. King Duncan wires Macbeth that he will be spending the night at his castle. Then Lady Macbeth tries to convince Macbeth to kill King Duncan by attacking his manhood. All Macbeth does is follow his wife's odors. During the banquet scene, Lady Macbeth is afraid her husband will expose himself in front of his guests. The proof that the witches in *Macbeth* were supernatural is that no one could eat what they cooked.

Romeo and Juliet are an example of a heroic couplet. This story presents a one on one situation between a man and a woman. Romeo and Juliet belonged to the families of the Montages and Copulates. They tell each other how much they are in love in the baloney scene. After much fighting in the public square, Romeo's last wish is to be laid by Juliet.

In *The Merchant of Venice*, Bassanio loved Portia, but he had no money to press his suit. *Taming of the Screw* is a play about Petruchio, who takes Kate from a bitter screw to an obedient wife. In *Antony and Cleopatra*, Cleopatra reclined to become Mark Anthony's mistress. She took the Roman Empire one man at a time.

Writing at the same time as Shakespeare was Miguel Cervantes. He wrote *Donkey Hote*. The next great author was John Milton. Milton wrote *Paradise Lost*. Then his wife died and he wrote *Paradise Regained*. □

Mr. Lederer's latest book is The Write Way. *Pocket Books will publish* Fractured English *later this year. Mr. Lederer requests readers to send their best collected bloopers to 5 Merrimack Street, Concord, N.H. 03301.*

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About the Author

Basil Venitis is the hottest trader of our times, a Wall Street high roller, a futures high hitter, and the keenest economist in New York. He was the first trader to apply Chaos Theory to financial markets. That's why he is considered by many traders as the first market chaologist and the father of Chaos Trading.

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THE VICE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON

December 13, 1995

Dear Rusty,

Happy Holidays from all of us at the Gore home, and let me just say, right now, things are up in the air. We've got a budget showdown looming, to be honest, and it looks like it's going to be another eye-to-eye staring contest. We were strategizing just this afternoon in the Oval Office.

"What's our strategy?" I asked.

Dick Morris looked up from his pipe. Bill puffed away on his cigar.

"I'm not following you, Mr. Vice President," Dick said.

"You see, Al," Bill chimed in, "Dick thinks—and I think, too, of course—that while a budget is nice—hey, more than nice, a budget is pretty darn useful in many ways—it's not the be-all-and-end-all."

"I'm a little confused," I said.

"What Dick is saying—and I agree with him, by the way—is that sometimes a budget is really good and really helpful by not being written. By not being settled. Do you get me?"

"What the President is saying," Dick interjected, puffing on his pipe, "is that a dog that doesn't bark sometimes saves the house from being robbed."

"So I shouldn't call my friends in the Senate and work the back channels to make a deal?"

"Weeeeellllll," Dick said, "if you put a gun to my head, I'd say no."

Bill gazed at me through the thickening smoke. "You see, Al," he said, "there are deficits and there are deficits. There's the $250-billion budget deficit—and hoo, boy, that's a big one, no one's saying it isn't—but there's also a little thing called a 'people deficit'."

"A 'people deficit'?" I asked.

"As in, how many people we need to approve of what we're doing versus how many people actually approve of what we're doing," Dick said.

"Oh," I murmured.

"And you've got to admit, Al," Bill said, tapping the latest Wall Street Journal/NBC News poll, "that Dick's starting to get at least one of these deficits under control."

I had to admit that, Rusty. As much as I like to think that I'm governed by pure motives, once or twice I've allowed myself to think about the coming campaign—not '96, you understand, but '00, and '04. And when I hear talk like that from Bill and Dick Morris, well, I get a little concerned. Gore '00 and Gore '04 are going to be a lot easier—and a lot more fun—if we can lick this budget thing right now.

So I left the meeting a little early, just as Bill wasn't returning a phone call from John Kasich. The minute I sat down behind my desk, the phone rang. It was Dad, calling from Carthage, Tennessee.

"Hi, Dad," I said. "How's the weather down there?"

"Cold, I think. Though I'm getting warmer," he said, shaking his highball glass next to the receiver. "Well, all this talk about Medicare and Medicaid and Social Security has got your mother and me a little worried."

"Worried?"

"You folks up there aren't planning to hang us older folks out to dry, are you?"

"Of course not, Dad," I said, with as much emphasis as I could.

"Glad to hear it. Some of the neighbors are starting to talk—there's a rumor around town that Medicare premiums are going to go up almost $14 in the next few years."

"Well, they might, Dad. You see, the system is very expensive—"

He interrupted me. "I know it's expensive, son. You forget: I voted it in! I was in the Senate at the time, Mr. Smartypants, while you were in Harvard Yard, experimenting with prose forms. And we didn't vote the damn thing in so's you guys could cut it off. We voted it in for us! So let us have it!"

"Dad?"

"You know, you've got your Great Aunt Catherine scared to death. She thinks that you guys in Washington are going to take her Medicare and her Social Security away and leave her penniless and begging in the streets."

I tried to soothe him. "Okay, Dad, I'll call her this afternoon and explain things to her."

"It'll have to be next month," Dad replied. "She's on a Mediterranean cruise until February."

He hung up on me. I was too keyed up to work, so I headed back to the Oval Office. But by the time I got there, it was such a smoke-filled room that I could barely recognize Bill and Dick.

My secretary just buzzed me—John Kasich is on line one. Excuse me while I don't take this.

Happy Holidays, Rusty!

Your pal, Al

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BOOKS, ARTS & MANNERS

Crashing Gore

FLORENCE KING

GIVING one's memoirs a title that has to be explained must be a status symbol among the leftist literati. First there was Lillian Hellman's *Pentimento*; now comes Gore Vidal's *Palimpsest*. Miss Hellman's title at least sounded pretty, but Maître Vidal's sounds like an arcane sexual practice involving an inflated condom that explodes like the *Hindenburg* in the tradesmen's entrance of some hired Apollo, sending ecstasy and other things washing over Maître Vidal.

But no. A palimpsest is a special kind of paper that can be written on and wiped clean again, like a slate; or paper that has been written on twice, the original writing having been rubbed out. Maître Vidal adapts the word to the task of remembering and recording one's life in the face of memory's familiar tricks.

He likens the process to the writer's task of revision in which one deletes something here, adds something there, or scratches out and starts all over again. But revision also includes pulling discrete material together into a logi-

Palimpsest: A Memoir, by Gore Vidal (Random House, 435 pp., $27.50)

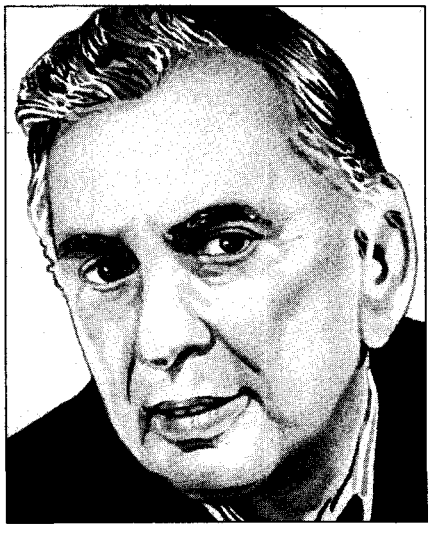
cally ordered narrative, and this he doesn't always do.

A case in point is his account of Hillary Clinton's visit to his Italian villa last year. The local papers treated it as a pilgrimage ("*Lady Clinton nel paradiso di Vidal*"), so he takes pains to resurrect the moment with all due pomp. After describing himself waiting seigneurially at the gates, he fashions a solemn interior monologue suitable for the occasion.

> The Clintons are now under attack because they would improve a society that is a heaven for, perhaps, one-tenth of the people and a hell, of varying degrees, for the rest. I doubt if he will survive his first term. He will experience either the bullet or a sudden resignation, and then cousin Albert, the Cromwell of Washington's Fairfax Hotel, will be Lord Protector.

That is Mrs. Clinton's cue, but instead of bringing her on and finishing the story, he suddenly flashes back to his childhood and does a palimpsest. The next sentence reads: "The only reason I was born was that rats had chewed on Mother's douche bag, or so she told me."

The floodgates of Maître Vidal's memory open wide, as they must to accommodate the multitudes that pass through. Returning from World War II, he patronized New York's Everard bathhouse, which offered "sex at its rawest and most exciting. . . . Newly invented penicillin had removed fears of venereal disease, and we were enjoying perhaps the freest sexuality that Americans would ever know. Most of the boys knew that they would soon be home for good, and married, and that this was a last chance to do what they were designed to do with each other."



Bonnie T. Gardner

At 23 he wrote *The City and the Pillar,* America's first openly homosexual novel. It was published in 1948, the same year that Dr. Alfred C. Kinsey published *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male.* Vidal was interviewed by Kinsey, who used the lobby of the Astor Hotel as an office so that he could catch the patrons of the gay Astor Bar. "I like to think," writes Vidal, "that it was by observing the easy trafficking at the Astor that he figured out what was obvious to most of us, though as yet undreamed of by American society at large: perfectly 'normal' young men, placed outside the usual round of family and work, will run riot with each other."

Kinsey was intrigued by Vidal's lack of sexual guilt. "I told him that it was probably a matter of class . . . guilt [was] a middle-class disorder from which power people seem exempt."

Vidal is the grandson of Sen. Thomas P. Gore of Oklahoma and the stepson of Hugh D. Auchincloss. These credentials combined with his early literary success gave him an entrée into the highest social and intellectual circles on two continents, enabling him to become the contradiction that he remains today: a misanthrope who knows everybody.

Let the name-dropping begin. In Europe he met Eddie Bismarck, the chancellor's grandson, who said of him, "He's brilliant, but in a way more like us"—that is, at home in aristocratic salons, instead of plagued by self-doubt like the middle-class Tennessee Williams. Through the Bismarcks he met the Windsors. "I got the duchess in a reminiscent mood," he boasts, claiming she told him: "I never wanted to get married. This was all *his* idea."

Princess Margaret has stayed at his villa and he has stayed at Windsor, where the two of them saved a swarm of bees from drowning in the pool and Margaret shouted, "Go forth and make honey!" She also confided, "Queen Mary hated us. We were royal and she

Miss King is the author of The Florence King Reader *and other books.*

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was not." Alas, Maître Vidal doesn't pay enough attention to poor Margaret, who told a mutual friend, "He never rings up! Kick him in the shins for me, and then give him a big kiss."

On the literary side he met Gide, realizing "my lifelong dream of shaking the hand that had shaken the hand of Oscar Wilde." (All right, you little devils, stop thinking what I'm thinking.) Describing his audience with the frail, ethereal Santayana in his cell at a convent, he quotes from another memoirist, Frederick Prokosch, to prove that Prokosch was lying when *he* claimed to have met Santayana: only the unerring Vidal ear can render the subtle intonations of the great philosopher's speech and bring him to life on the page. (He quotes from numerous other memoirists to prove things of this sort.)

He hated Truman Capote ("the round pale fetus face") for his addiction to vicious gossip, but he dishes up plenty of vicious gossip himself, especially about his Auchincloss stepsister, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis. Like a loutish frat rat he says she lost her virginity to a friend of his in a stalled elevator. He tells a particularly ghoulish story about her last days: "From the family, I hear that the cancer had gone to her brain and that she had had a hole drilled in her skull so that radium—or whatever—could be put in."

He is drawn to the dark. Visiting a male brothel in Paris that was founded by Proust to satisfy his voyeurism (the holes are still in the walls), he relishes a morbid anecdote: "Proust had once become ecstatic when he watched a rat bite a youth's hand—or was it the other way around?"

Naturally he knew Greta Garbo, who provides him with the most outlandish story in the book.

> But she was very funny about her visit to the White House. Early on, Jackie had told me, "One of the few nice things about being here is we can get to meet everyone we've ever wanted to meet." So, inevitably, Garbo came to dinner. "The President took me into his bedroom. So romantic. Then he gave me a whale's tooth and we went back to Mrs. *Jah*-kee, who said, 'He never gave me a whale's tooth.'"

Can this be? Why is there no mention of it in all those Kennedy books? Could Garbo possibly have visited the White House without its being discovered? No matter how many threats and bribes were made, it would have come out, wouldn't it? Or did I miss the whole thing during my years in the Gobi Desert?

But I digress, as Maître Palimpsest would say. He digresses often, never missing a chance to take a swipe at those out of his favor: "*lumpen*-imperialists of the far right like Buckley Jr."; "Jesus-Christers" (Christians); and Charlton Heston: "all the charm of a wooden Indian." That's a middle-class cliché but not his only one. Seated next to Jack Kerouac, with whom he had a one-night stand, he confesses, "I feel the heat from his body."

He practices his own form of political correctness. In the past he rejected "homosexual" as a noun and termed himself a "homosexualist." Now he prefers "same-sexualist" and shows his disdain for "straight" and "gay" by putting them in quotation marks. His preferred adjective is "homoerotic."

His only interests were and are "reading, writing, and anonymous sex," though turning seventy has broadened his horizons to include his blood pressure and his blood-sugar count. He records them in the book along with a list of his medicines, leaving the reader with a picture of a worn-out Regency buck taking the waters at a German spa. □

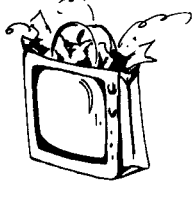
Check-Out Time

HILTON KRAMER

FROM his penthouse suite in the Hotel America, where the country's troublesome rabble are confined to the television screen and no issue is so urgent that it cannot be encapsulated in a facile irony, the impeccably attired Lewis Lapham, editor of *Harper's*, descends to the lobby at periodic intervals to observe the mysterious behavior of his social inferiors. What awful people he finds loitering about the premises! How is it possible, he wonders, that so many of the uncouth and the unscrupulous have gained admittance to *his* Hotel America?

Hotel America: Scenes in the Lobby of the Fin-de-Siècle, by Lewis Lapham (Verso, 371 pp., $24.95)

The worst, from this aggrieved patrician perspective, are the monsters representing new money, which is judged to be so much filthier than the money accumulated earlier on by the likes of the Lapham clan. But almost as objectionable are the political arrivistes who have soiled themselves forever in Mr. Lapham's eyes by actually running for election to public office—and winning! As for artists and intellectuals, these are in some respects the lowest form of life for Mr. Lapham, and one of the few satisfactions that he genuinely savors nowadays derives from his unquestioned belief that they amount to little more than the flotsam and jetsam of a despicable Zeitgeist. These and other lamentable creatures, all of them American, Mr. Lapham characteristically regards with a distaste that is quick to escalate into purblind contempt, and it is in this insalubrious state of eclipsed vision that he returns to his privileged sanctuary to record his blinkered impressions.



The result isn't so much a chronicle of contemporary American life as it is a series of fables or tall tales which Mr. Lapham is continuously engaged in rehearsing to account for his own bewilderments and resentments. History, especially recent history, is never quite real for Mr. Lapham until it passes into his mind as a kind of media entertainment that lends itself to his amused condescension. The ostensible focus of *Hotel America* is the period between the winter of 1989 and the spring of 1995, which Mr. Lapham describes as a time when "the American explaining classes were casting around for a national folk tale to take the place of the Cold War." This observation is, typically, neither original nor true, but in one version or another it quickly became a staple of the liberal media as soon as the Soviet Union had collapsed—and is thus deemed to be reusable as a substitute for wit in Mr. Lapham's *Hotel America*.

The book abounds, indeed, in such fatuous media leftovers. Another is the notion that "the image of the Soviet

Mr. Kramer is editor of The New Criterion.

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Union as monolithic evil held in place the image of the United States as monolithic virtue." Now, as anyone who has not suffered a total loss of historical memory surely knows, the "image of the United States as monolithic virtue" has been in fairly short supply for quite a long time. When, exactly, was it to be observed in our recent history? During the Vietnam War? At the time of Watergate? When Jimmy Carter was inviting us to ponder the nation's "malaise," or during the Iran–Contra hearings? For the thirty years since the commencement of Lyndon Johnson's "war on poverty," public debate in this country has continuously depicted ours as a deeply flawed society, if not something worse—a wicked society. The "image of the United States as monolithic virtue" was nowhere to be found—except, perhaps, among foreigners desperate to avail themselves of the liberties and opportunities that they knew American democracy would be able to give them.

Distinguished figures in our recent history fare no better in Mr. Lapham's *Hotel America* than history itself. I don't doubt that there are readers who will be amused by a writer who thinks it witty to classify Henry Kissinger's *White House Years* with Hitler's *Diaries* as "two variants of more or less artful fraud," but I am not one of them. And the treatment of Henry Kissinger in *Hotel America* amounts to a virtual valentine compared to that meted out to Ronald Reagan, which again is little more than a recycling of media cant.

Toward the end of this tiresome book, Mr. Lapham offers us a kind of aria or soliloquy that is designed to display his deepest thoughts and prompt our happy applause, but this—like so much else in *Hotel America*—is yet another flatulent attempt to be amusing about serious matters that are beyond his capacity to take seriously:

> Once upon a time, before the awful misfortunes of the 1960s, America was a theme park constructed by non-union labor along the lines of the Garden of Eden. But then something terrible happened, and a plague of guitarists descended upon the land. Spawned by the sexual confusions of the amoral news media, spores of Marxist ideology blew around in the wind, multiplied the powers of government, and impregnated the English departments of the Ivy League universities, which then gave birth to the monster of deconstruction that devoured the arts of learning.

And so on. As for the Cold War, Mr. Lapham can think of nothing better to compare it to than "the first act of *The Nutcracker Suite* when the toy soldier does battle with the army of horrific mice."

In Lewis Lapham's penthouse suite at the Hotel America, this is what passes for humor and sagacity. Elsewhere, however, it readily identifies itself as the drivel of a patrician snob who has somehow wandered into the wrong vocation and doesn't yet understand that the joke is on him. □

History of an Illusion

E. FULLER TORREY

DO WE really need another book about Sigmund Freud and his ideas? In the case of Richard Webster's scholarly and substantive new biography, the answer is clearly yes. Besides being an important contribution to the analysis and criticism of Freud's theories, Webster's book provides a pleasant change from the usual *corpus Sigmundium*, being neither a fawning hagiography along the lines of Peter Gay's *Freud: A Life for Our Time*, nor a vengeful attack by a disaffected disciple like Jeffrey Masson's *The Assault on Truth*. Webster says that his book "is not intended simply as another stinging rebuke to Freudians" but rather as a constructive critique of Freud's mistaken theory "partly because I think it is mistaken in a particularly in-

Why Freud Was Wrong: Sin, Science, and Psychoanalysis, by Richard Webster (Basic, 673 pp., $35)

Dr. Torrey is a research psychiatrist in Washington, D.C., and the author of Freudian Fraud: The Malignant Effects of Freud's Theory on American Thought and Culture.

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teresting way, and partly in order to establish the need for an alternative theory of human sexuality and human nature."

The author's central thesis is that psychoanalysis "is quintessentially a religion and should be treated as such." "Freud's achievement cannot be understood if we treat him simply as a scientist, a psychologist, or even as the creator of a biological pseudo-science; it can be understood, finally, only if we regard him in the way in which, deep within his own heart, he saw himself—as a messiah and as the founder of a new religion." Freud's preoccupation with the messianic tradition and his belief that he was a new Moses have been noted by many Freudian scholars, though Webster diverges from other biographers in emphasizing the Christian roots of Freud's ideas, whereas previous scholars have emphasized their Jewish roots. Webster appears well suited to his task, having previously written on theology and English literature and having a broad knowledge of the history of science.

Webster claims that "the theory of infantile sexuality was in effect adopted as the creed of the Freudian church" and that Freud placed "a confessional ritual at the very heart of the psychoanalytic movement." The historical and scientific origins of Freud's theories about infantile sexuality, masturbation, the Oedipus complex, the unconscious, and the meaning of dreams are explored in detail, with the author concluding that Freud's "essentially religious frame of mind . . . always led him to prefer speculating about the invisible to observing the visible."

Although Webster eschews direct attacks on Freud's character, unpleasant traits emerge in the telling of the story. For example: "there is a great deal of evidence, most of it in Freud's own frank and astonishing words, that he went out of his way to persuade, encourage, cajole, and sometimes bully his female patients to reproduce scenes of child sexual abuse which he himself had reconstructed from their symptoms or their associations." Elsewhere he alludes to Freud's "sometimes less than scrupulous attitude toward truth" which, in the context of this book, is certainly an understatement. Freud's apparent misdiagnosis of many of his famous patients is also discussed in detail, including the case of Anna O., who probably had temporal-lobe epilepsy or another organic brain disorder rather than hysteria. Indeed the entire psychoanalytic edifice appears to have been constructed on the sands of misdiagnosis.

The most egregious flaw in Freud's character, which Webster discusses in detail, was Freud's "evident failure to understand the human implications of his own decision to take his daughter [Anna] into analysis." What is one to say about a man who taught that a child's sexual attraction to the parent of the opposite sex is crucial for development, but who then had his 26-year-old daughter describe her sexual fantasies to him? Would you buy a used theory from this man?

One of the most interesting sections of the book is an Afterword entitled "Freud's False Memories: Psychoanalysis and the Recovered-Memory Movement." Webster became aware of the freshet of false memories in America as he was completing his book and decided that "no attempt to estimate the influence of Freud upon our century would be complete if it did not offer some account of this movement." He quotes Frederick Crews as estimating conservatively "that a million people have been helped by their psychotherapists to recover putative 'memories' of child sexual abuse since 1988 alone. Tens of thousands of families have been torn apart by allegations of incest springing from these 'recovered memories.'" Webster does not deny that sexual abuse does occur in childhood, and that psychoanalytic theory has caused damage by assuming that memories of such abuse were fantasies. Damage equally great, however, has been caused by psychotherapists in a latter-day psychoanalytic tradition who assume that memories of childhood sexual abuse—including memories that have been suggested by the therapists themselves—are all true. As the author notes: "the notion that Freud based his seduction theory on real instances of sexual abuse has become the foundation myth of the entire recovered-memory movement."

The section on the recovered-memory movement is the author's only attempt to assess the influence of Freudian theories on contemporary culture, and this is a shortcoming of the book. There is nothing here about the Freudian roots of the don't-blame-me-I'm-not-responsible-because-I-had-a-dysfunctional-family movement, and very little about Freud's misogynistic teachings (e.g., he called girls "the little creature without a penis") and their effects on the women's movement.

Perhaps the most surprising omission in Webster's biography is his minimization of Freud's well-known use of cocaine from 1884 to 1886 and his enthusiastic promotion of what he referred to as "this magical substance" before its addictive properties had become evident. Webster makes no mention of Freud's use of cocaine after 1886, despite including in his bibliography E. M. Thornton's *Freud and Cocaine*, Robert Byck's *Cocaine Papers by Sigmund Freud*, and Jeffrey Masson's *The Complete Letters of Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess*. What these books make clear is that Freud continued using cocaine at least intermittently until 1895 even though it was known to be addictive. For example, on June 12, 1895, Freud wrote to Fliess that "I need lots of cocaine."

Between 1895 and 1899 Freud continued to complain of irregular heartbeat, headaches, nasal stuffiness, and other symptoms that are commonly found in cocaine abusers. E. M. Thornton concluded in her 1983 book that Freud almost certainly continued to abuse cocaine until 1899. Her conclusion has been subsequently corroborated by Freud scholar Peter Swales, who unearthed a letter written by Ernest Jones saying: "I don't think he [Freud] gave up interest in cocaine and I guess he took it himself off and on for 15 years." Since Freud's initial use of cocaine is clearly established as being in 1884, this would place his use of it as continuing until approximately 1899.

By that time Freud had developed and published virtually all his theories including those of infant sexuality, the Oedipal complex, and the interpretation of dreams (the last being dated 1900 but actually published in 1899). Therefore, given Freud's known abuse of cocaine, scholars looking for the origins of his theories must seriously consider their roots as extending into the white powder as well as into theological hermeneutics, mythological traditions, and literary exegesis. □

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The Good Fight

RICHARD BROOKHISER

MARVIN Olasky's title and subtitle offer a 13-word summary of his book's argument. Mr. Olasky, a favorite thinker of Newt Gingrich, surveys the run-up to the American Revolution and the political struggles of the new country's first quarter-century, and sees, where others have seen wrangles for money or empire, a straightforward struggle for freedom and morality. Britain's imperial establishment of the eighteenth century was tyrannical and vicious, which is the natural tendency of all centralized states. When the Americans replaced the Articles of Confederation with a more centralized Constitution, they started themselves down the same road.

Fighting for Liberty and Virtue: Political and Cultural Wars in Eighteenth-Century America, by Marvin Olasky (Crossway, 316 pp., $25)

The struggle of two hundred years ago continues today. Mr. Olasky says in his Introduction that he "deliberately refrained from equating current political leaders and parties with those of the past." This is technically true. But readers who consult the Appendix of "Soundbites from the 1780s for the 1990s," where they will find sections devoted to "High Taxes," "The Imperial Judiciary," and "Term Limits," won't have to ponder long to make the necessary conversions.

Mr. Olasky, like Paul Johnson, is a hanging judge, whose every verdict must be checked. Lord Cornwallis and —amazingly—Wolfe of Quebec are called bad generals. Mr. Olasky's picture of imperial immorality in late-eighteenth-century England would be complicated by mentioning the fact that John Wesley, the leader of the Methodist revival, was a diehard Tory and enemy of American independence. So Mr. Olasky doesn't mention it. On the other hand, he is not pious about the good guys. His portrait of Benjamin Franklin is especially sharp, and his estimate of George Washington's reticent deism is judicious.

I wish Mr. Olasky had discussed Freemasonry in eighteenth-century America, and the influence it had or didn't have on the local elite. I recently spent a long day at the New York Public Library looking for books on the subject that were written neither by Masons nor by lunatics, and I found one. It would be interesting to read what an intelligent born-again writer like Olasky had to say about the "arcane pseudo-religion" to which Franklin, Washington, and Lafayette in some degree adhered.

Fighting for Liberty and Virtue is worth reading for its presentation of three fresh perspectives. One is its attitude toward the Mother Country. American conservatives can get as muzzy on the subject of Britannia as a Wilkinson Sword Blade commercial. Anglophobia has been left to the Irish and other lesser breeds. Marvin Olasky is a revival of old-time Yankee Brit-hating. In his book, our former rulers weren't just high-taxers, they were fops, bribe-takers, high-rollers, adulterers, and sodomites. Their archetype was Edward Hyde, Lord Cornbury, the transvestite governor of New York who liked to leap on unsuspecting male passersby and tug their ears.

The book's second refreshing perspective is its wariness of the Constitution, reflecting the doubts of patriots such as Samuel Adams and Patrick Henry. Under the Articles of Confederation, Congress had the power only to make "requisitions" of money from the states, which they paid, or didn't, as it suited them. The Constitution gave it the power to levy direct taxes. Wouldn't we have done better, Mr. Olasky asks, to adopt a compromise proposed by George Mason, giving "the general government the power of demanding their quotas of the states, with an alternative of laying direct taxes in case of noncompliance"? At the end of day, Madison argued, the only barrier to tyranny in any system is the virtue of the people. Mr. Olasky agrees, but won-

Mr. Brookhiser is the author of the forthcoming Founding Father: Rediscovering George Washington. *His great-great-great-great-grandfather fought at the Battle of Bennington.*

AGING AND OLD AGE

Richard A. Posner

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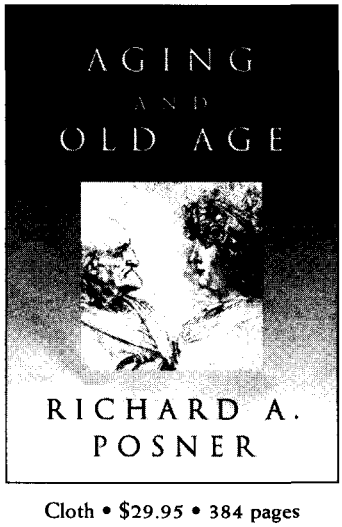

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ders whether a centralized system isn't more likely to "cement into power the vicious."

But the best thing about *Fighting for Liberty and Virtue* is that it is a book that an eighteenth-century American might have written. Not one of the famous ones, but Reverend Smith, or Representative Johnson, of Anyplace. Historians can stroke their chins and say what was "really" going on two hundred years ago, but a fight for liberty and virtue is what most of the actors thought was going on.

The sense of intellectual and moral impersonation is so complete that I wish Mr. Olasky had purged his style of colloquialisms. *Fighting for Liberty and Virtue* too often reads like the transcript of a televangelist who is so nice, you would switch him off after five minutes. Eighteenth-century Americans didn't write like that. Their country was too small, and they were too virtuous. □

Absolutely Fabulist

JAMES BOWMAN

SALMAN Rushdie's first novel since *The Satanic Verses* reveals once again that he is a writer with an astounding fertility of imagination. But it is hard not to come away with the sense that all this story-telling and linguistic invention is only for showing off and that Rushdie has written the book in order to demonstrate that he can write it. His subject, in the end, is his own cleverness, and the one illusion he has no interest in creating is the illusion of reality. Back in the Middle Ages, a fabulist like him would have gone to considerable lengths to convince us that the marvelous tales he was about to relate were true by citing some well-respected *auctor* as their source. Rushdie, by contrast, glories in the fact that he made it all up himself. If you were to start to believe that it was real, you might get into trouble.

The Moor's Last Sigh, by Salman Rushdie (Pantheon, 448 pp, $25)

And, in fact, he has got into trouble—big trouble—from religious people. First the Ayatollah. Now, with *The Moor's Last Sigh*, he seems to have put his books and perhaps himself in danger again by offending a number of Hindus with his portrait of a monstrously corrupt leader of an oxymoronically fundamentalist Hindu sect. Small wonder that the only parts of the novel that read as if there is anything genuine about them are the parts in which he is mercilessly satirizing religion. Perhaps since he sees himself as being in the same line of business as the religious storytellers, it is to Rushdie almost a sort of blasphemy against the sacredness of Art to take one's stories as in any literal sense representative of reality.

Certainly the theme of Art is important in the novel, which tells a story of enormous complexity about the rise and fall of a part-Jewish, part-Christian dynasty of Indian merchants from the early years of this century down to the present. It is narrated by the family's last scion, Moraes "Moor" Zogoiby, a deformed creature who suffers from the family's tendency to respiratory problems and who is also doomed to age at twice the normal rate. The central character, however, is the narrator's mother, *née* Aurora Da Gama, who is not only an artist of world renown but the lover of Nehru and a symbol of Mother India herself, a magic land made for the magical realism that shimmers like a mirage throughout the book. A film actor once says to her: "Auroraji, you are mixing truth and make-believe," at which her only son scoffs: "as if it were a sin."

In the middle of her artistic career, Aurora "fell into deep creative confusion, a semi-paralysis born of an uncertainty not merely about realism but about the nature of the real itself." Eventually, she remained (like her creator, we are tempted to say), "more and more, inside the walls of her personal Paradise, and turned, once and for all, in the direction . . . of her heart: that is to say, inwards, to the reality of dreams." Her son too, who posed as her model, began to feel that "the story unfolding on her canvases seemed more like my autobiography than the real story of my life." Art here is also associated with prophecy from the time that Aurora decorates her bedroom walls as a teenager to the time when she conceals the portrait of her killer within one of her paintings.

It is partly the destructive power of the female, related to Hinduism through dreams and visions and art, that the book is about. The Moor's mother and his lover, Uma Saravati, another celebrated artist, are deadly rivals for his affections and for power over him. Uma especially is invested with the protean powers of femininity to be what everyone imagines her and wants her to be. She becomes a fiend in human form who is instrumental in the destruction of the Zogoiby family.

Perhaps even more sinister is the masculine corruption and violence and power of the patriarchal monotheisms—especially as they are represented by the Moor's father, Abraham Zogoiby, an Arabic Jew but purportedly also descended from the last Moorish sultans of Granada. Both mother and father are associated with a series of sacrifices of their son, the Moor, who is thus a version of Isaac, but it is Abraham the patriarch who says: "I am a business person. What there is to do, I do"—words that, to Rushdie, recall God's own name, *I am that I am*. The son of such parents is thankful (to whom?) that they "had been cured of religion" and, like them, specializes in blasphemy. Aurora paints "religious pictures for people who have no god" and delights in her paradoxical iconoclasm as much as Rushdie himself delights to take on those rival storytellers who claim a revelatory privilege for their products.

Art for him is like the cartoons with which Aurora has the Goan painter Vasco Miranda decorate her children's nursery. In their world, playful children are relieved of the iron logic of causation. "Give me boulders," Aurora says in her comic, Babu English, "that only temporarily flattofy you when they drop down on your head, bombs that give black faces only, and running-over-empty-air-until-you-looko-down. Give me knottofied-up rifle-barrels, and bathfuls of big gold coins. Never mind about harps and angels, forget all those stinking gardens; for my kiddies, this is the Paradise I want." To the ever-playful Rushdie, it is this trivial popular culture —Popeye, too, says "I am what I am"—which is the salvation of the world.

The "leftish" Dr. Zeenat Vakil, Aurora's biographer and academic proprietor

Mr. Bowman is American Editor of the Times Literary Supplement.

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and the author of the monograph, *Imperso-Nation and Dis/Semi/Nation: Dialogics of Eclecticism and Interrogations of Authenticity in A.Z.*, says it best: "I blame fiction. The followers of one fiction knock down another popular piece of make-believe, and bingo! It's war." She refers, of course, not to the comfortable fictions of cartoons but to the kinds of fiction that people are apt to take too seriously—which makes it particularly poignant that so many religious people the world over have taken the tedious fantasies that make up Rushdie's fictions so much more seriously than they deserve. □

FILM

Catching Up, Part I

JOHN SIMON

SCORNED by most higher-brow reviewers, ***Carrington*** is a film I have a soft spot for. The playwright and scenarist Christopher Hampton has simplified and slightly sanitized the life of the painter Dora Carrington—her unrequited and unquenchable passion for the homosexual writer Lytton Strachey, and her other friendships, affairs, and marriage—but since even that brings in most of Bloomsbury, he could not delve deep below the surfaces. Yet, as his own director, he has striven for authenticity, using actual locations whenever possible, getting actors to look like the people they are portraying, and faithfully re-creating Carrington's and other Bloomsbury art work.

The film does have a somewhat unreal quality because it is told in brief, often disjointed scenes, and because it tends to dispense with extras: the characters who matter are largely left alone with their ideas, feelings, relationships, and talk, talk, talk. For me, this suffices, especially as subtly photographed by Denis Lenoir. As Strachey, Jonathan Pryce gives a performance that is idiomatic, zesty, finely textured, and, because wholly unsentimental, profoundly moving. Emma Thompson, though hardly the childlike and apple-cheeked creature Dora Carrington was, conveys those tomboyish qualities impressively in a performance scarcely behind Pryce's. The others are apt, too; only Rufus Sewell overacts the tempestuous painter and Dora-lover Mark Gertler.

The one serious drawback is the abominable score by the always atrocious Michael Nyman; when, late in the film, Schubert's C-major Quintet takes over, the relief is indescribable. *Carrington* is a somewhat sketchy but ultimately very affecting story; if it leads you eventually to Michael Holroyd's Strachey biography, so much the better.

■ ***Casino*** is Nicholas Pileggi and Martin Scorsese's three-hour adaptation of the former's book-length exposé of one mob-run Las Vegas casino that can reasonably stand in for all old, pre-corporate gambling dens. It is creepily as well as comically spellbinding as long as it follows the book's factual account, but when it turns into fiction, it becomes turgid and curiously cartoonish. Scorsese is an accomplished director, and garish criminal lives are mother's milk to his ever-growing expertise. We follow the careers of the relatively "nice" gangster/casino operator Sam "Ace" Rothstein; his vicious former fellow mobster Nicky Santoro, who foists himself on Ace as an enforcer, only to become further corrupted by his new deadly power; and Ginger McKenna, the high-rolling hooker extraordinaire, who lovelessly marries the one, panickily gets involved with the other, and proves anathema to everyone, herself foremost. This plot emerges rather more melodramatic than all the brutal murders and torturings that surround it.

Robert De Niro, Joe Pesci, and, yes, Sharon Stone could not be bettered, the supporting cast is wonderfully sleazy (especially James Woods as her petty ex-pimp whom Ginger keeps returning to), but finally it is only the documentary half that truly works. Still, half of three hours is quite a bit.

■ ***Mighty Aphrodite*** is Woody Allen in a milder, mellower mode, complete with a tragifarcical Greek chorus. There is also a bit more, not entirely convincing, sex than usual, and, at the end, a series of plot contrivances far too facile for comfort. As yet another whore with a golden heart, the birth mother of his adopted child, whom Woody wants to reform, Mira Sorvino is outstanding, and almost makes up for all the other, underwritten roles. All except that of Mr. Allen, who puts on his Woodyisms thicker than ever. Much depends on how funny you find such a line as, "You didn't want a blowjob, so the least I could do is get you a tie."

■ ***Seven*** is one of the meanest, ugliest, most ferocious films ever made. It is also one of the most original, imaginative, and suspenseful of its kind. If you have nerves, if not of steel, at least of aluminum, you should find *Seven*, ingeniously directed by David Fincher and provocatively written by Andrew Kevin Walker, as absorbing as it is jolting, particularly given the moody cinematography of Darius Khondji. As two very different cops tracking a serial killer of demonic brilliance, Morgan Freeman and Brad Pitt give superb performances; in a supporting part that looms much larger than it is, Kevin Spacey shows yet again that he is the finest young character actor in Hollywood today. He performs a harrowing climactic scene with an understated intensity for the like of which we would have to reach back to Ralph Richardson. A must for those who can take it, the film is only slightly marred by the presence of the untalented and unsightly Gwyneth Paltrow.

■ ***Get Shorty*** is based on a novel by Elmore Leonard, which has to be better than this feeble crime comedy, unstylishly directed by Barry Sonnenfeld, equally poor at pacing and atmosphere, and not helped by Scott Frank's screenplay. John Travolta recycles his performance in *Pulp Fiction*, which was good once, but, to quote E. E. Cummings, "like Gillette Razor Blades / having been used and reused / to the mystical moment of dullness emphatically is / Not To Be Resharpened." But there is flavorous work from Gene Hackman, Delroy Lindo, and Dennis Farina; even Danny DeVito contributes a ripe comic bit. Only the ex-model Rene Russo fails, coming across more like a female impersonator than ever. In the ending,

Mr. Simon is NR*'s film critic.*

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the escalating cuteness explodes all over, especially in the filmmakers' faces.

■ We have had some pretty dubious Presidents, but none more self-satisfied than Andrew Shepherd, the protagonist of ***The American President***, as written by Aaron Sorkin and enacted by Michael Douglas. Mr. Sorkin may have used up his stock of cleverness with *A Few Good Men*, and Mr. Douglas oozes enough of his habitual smugness for you to wish for an umbrella. On the political level, this is caricature with little wit; on the romantic level—as the widowed President shyly romances and awkwardly beds a sophisticated environmental lobbyist, Sydney Wade—it is overmuch ado about less than nothing. There is no reason for this President not to have such an eminently suitable girlfriend, of whom even his daughter approves. And, as they're in love, what's to stop them from marrying?

Instead, we get carrying on such as in those Ruritanian operettas where the course of princes' love for commoners never ran smooth. Or perhaps those stories where families are in a dither over a teenage love affair. Only in this case, the family is the entire presidential staff; the ruthlessly demagogic, hypocritical, and manifestly Republican challenger for the Presidency, Senator Rumson; and those damnable newspapers. It's funny that JFK—though, unlike Shepherd, married—never had the least trouble connecting with slews of women.

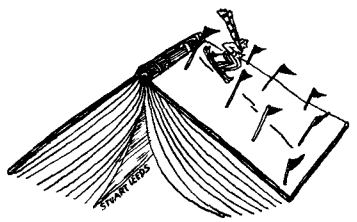
Typical of this film is the way it trivializes serious matters while inflating trivia. Thus we get a pre-coitus interruptus when Andy, as the Prexie likes to be called by his intimates, tells Sydney, "I'm sorry, we'll have to wait: the Libyans have just bombed C-STAT." (Don't ask me what C-STAT is.) When, after their first White House copulation, Andy apologizes for his staff's 5 A.M. irruption and promises to do better by Sydney next time, she responds, "I'm no expert, but I thought we did pretty good this time." Since she behaves like a sexual expert, she must be referring to her English, in which she does only pretty well. But Andy has his Achilles' heel too, as emerges when the lovers pore over his college grades.

SYDNEY: "Nobody gets this many A's and a C– in Women's Studies."

ANDY: "Yeah, well, that course wasn't what I thought it was about."

What clinches the film's sloppiness is its inattention to detail. Thus after little Lucy Shepherd tells her astonished dad, all aflutter about his first dinner date, to be sure to praise Sydney's shoes because women like that, we are never shown those shoes. Presently, Sydney amazes Andy by talking what Hollywood considers flawless French to the French ambassador, played by one Clement Von Franckenstein, whose accent is such that we cannot pardon his French. Again, the highest-ranking military man on Shepherd's staff is played by an Oliver North lookalike. Since Shepherd is a liberal, what is that supposed to mean? And must we have scenes featuring nasty Senator Rumson (Richard Dreyfuss, and predictable) bathed in a ghostly white light?

As Sydney, Annette Bening, though prematurely aged (is that what marriage to Warren Beatty does to you?), has a good deal of charm; ditto Samantha Mathis as a presidential secretary. Martin Sheen is solid as Shepherd's oldest friend and chief of staff; and David Paymer, Anna Deavere Smith, John Mahoney, and Michael J. Fox (a credible Stephanopoulos stand-in) are in fine fettle. But there is no overcoming the smartass screenplay and Rob Reiner's flaccid direction. Lilly Kilvert, the production designer, improved the White House interiors, so the Clintons at least may get something from this clinker.



■ For those seeking more unusual fare, there is, first, ***Frankie Starlight***, coadapted for the screen by Chet Rayno from his bestseller *The Dork of Cork*. Mr. Rayno teaches astronomy and writing at an obscure college in Boston, and writes a weekly column for the *Globe*. I don't know about the novel, but the screenplay jerks its characters hither and yon for mostly uncompelling reasons, and, as directed by Michael Lindsay-Hogg, at a notably unsteady pace. It concerns a young French girl (Anne Parillaud) who escapes war-torn France on an American troopship, where many have sex with her, then lands in Dublin as the ward and, briefly, mistress of an Irish customs officer (Gabriel Byrne, and good).

The child she bears an unknown father is a dwarf, more adjusted, thanks to being introduced to star-watching, than the family's disturbed eldest daughter (Georgina Cates), whose dad-watching *in flagrante delicto* drives her over the edge. One day a former soldier from that troopship (Matt Dillon) shows up. He was one of the few who did not possess Frenchie, but, in love with her, takes her and the dwarf back home to Texas with him. This proves a disaster, especially after his runaway wife returns with their children. In the end, everyone dies or disappears except the now adult dwarf, who, having written a bestseller about his mother, marries his no longer demented quasi-stepsister, herself a successful painter.

The movie, astronomy and all, is nonsense; yet a film that employs two dwarfs (Corban Walker and young Alan Pentony, both fine) cannot but earn our benisons. Such able Irish actors as Niall Toibin and Dearbhla Molloy can't save their underwritten parts, but Mlle Parillaud transcends hers *ad astra*. She has that distant, moody, gaunt look the camera adores, and eyes big and otherworldly enough to make any man yearn to bring her down to earth. "Are there dwarfs in America?" the young dwarf asks. "Sure," he is told, "there are dwarfs everywhere." Especially among the minds that produce bestsellers, and movies based upon them.

■ Even more flummoxing is ***When Night Is Falling***, by Patricia Rozema from Canada, a country that has yet to bring off a first-rate feature film. Mlle Rozema, also responsible for the insufferably pretentious and inept *I've Heard the Mermaids Singing*, here surpasses herself in flat-footed dialogue, fallen structural arches, and plotting as pedestrian as it is unpersuasive. The story concerns Camille, an instructor at a Protestant divinity school, whose joint chaplainship she is about to assume with Martin, her fiancé. But then, in the unlikeliest possible way, she meets Petra, a circus performer (with no special circus skills that I can detect), and the two fall passionately in love. It must be hard to make such a triangle uninteresting, but Miss Rozema achieves it with ease, even though, to further spice things up, Petra is black, which allows for picturesque bedroom compositions in strong color contrast.

Camille's little dog, Bob, behaves queerly too, is killed without motive, then kept by his mistress in her fridge. She does not eat him, though, but does

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try to freeze herself as well—to death—when, upon at last burying Bob, she goes to sleep in the falling snow, only to be resuscitated. The writing is on the order of "Camille, I'd love to see you in the moonlight with your head thrown back and your body on fire." Petra, who says this, gets her wish, if only in the sheets and minus the moonlight. The acting is nondescript, even from the usually excellent Henry Czerny, best when seen as just an oversized eyeball peeping through a window at the women going at it. There are gems galore to choose from; my favorite is a lovers' quarrel across a tabletop on which Bob, freshly removed from the refrigerator, lies quietly defrosting. □

DELECTATIONS

Ave Maria

LINDA BRIDGES

THE *New York Times* gave ample coverage the first week in December to the celebration of the hundredth anniversary of one of the great institutions of this city, and indeed of the country: the New York Public Library. I was the more struck by that coverage because I was looking forward to another centenary celebration that would take place later the same week, just a few blocks away from the Astors' lions, but which so far as I have seen the *Times* hasn't noticed: that of the Church of St. Mary the Virgin on West 46th Street.

This is not a fanciful juxtaposition. Both buildings were very much a product of the post–Civil War ferment in which the city moved uptown and the brownstones of Edith Wharton's childhood were overshadowed by Venetian palazzos and Gothic châteaux commissioned by new names like Vanderbilt and Carnegie. The blocks between *NR*'s offices and St. Mary's have a particularly rich concentration of turn-of-the-last-century architecture: the Library itself, the Morgan Library, the Century Club, the Yacht Club, the Harvard Club, the Yale Club. St. Mary's even shares an Astor connection with the Library: in 1867, when the parish was originally founded, the John Jacob Astor who *floruit* at that time donated the land for its building on West 45th Street; 28 years later, when the founding rector, Fr. Brown, and his trustees decided the parish had outgrown that building and found the site for a larger one, John Jacob's son William made his contribution by buying back the 45th Street land for fair market value.

The newspapers of the time certainly noticed St. Mary's. During our centenary weekend Dr. William Franklin of General Theological Seminary quoted from contemporary accounts of the parish's early decades that appeared in the *Sun*, the *Herald*, the *Tribune*, the *World*, and, yes, the *Times*, from its perch two blocks away. Not that the coverage was always favorable. I believe it was the *Sun* that reported indignantly in 1877 that Mass was being celebrated not only daily but *with incense*, and what kind of behavior was this for a Protestant church? (To which the answer is that it isn't Protestant, it's Anglo-Catholic; but one then thinks of the fuss Newman had stirred up forty years earlier by using two modest candles in a Mass at *his* Church of St. Mary the Virgin, in Oxford.) By the time the present building was going up in 1895—with the architects, Napoleon Le Brun and his son Pierre, using thirteenth-century French Gothic as their model—the local press had long since decided that St. Mary's was over the top.

And it still is, gloriously. The centenary weekend began with a Solemn Pontifical Mass on the actual anniversary day, December 8, the Feast of the Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. I had never before seen—except maybe on television, at the installation of a Pope or an Archbishop of Canterbury—so many bishops gathered together. The procession positively bristled with miters, belonging to the Presiding Bishop; the Bishop of Edinburgh and Primus of Scotland; and the Bishops of New York, Salisbury, and Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. Given all the difficulties and divisions

Miss Bridges is NR*'s managing editor.*

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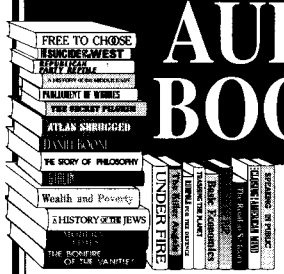

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within the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion generally over the last thirty years (and there are men of good will who, while wholeheartedly approving of most of what is said and done at St. Mary's these days, would strongly disapprove of other things), it must have been heartening for the assembled bishops, as it was for us whose parish it is, to see more than eight hundred worshippers crowding into a space built for six hundred, with latecomers spilling over into the side chapels. And if some of those present were more music lovers than worshippers—well, priests, as practical people, presumably know that more than one person has been lured in by beauty and stayed to hear the Word of God.

We got both in full measure over the course of the weekend. My music history is weak, but I'd guess the Palestrina Mass setting used on Sunday morning was the oldest music we heard; the newest pieces were two motets that our music director, Kyler Brown, had commissioned for the occasion: one from Elliot Levine, a former member of St. Mary's Choir; the other from Jackson Hill, whose lovely Mass setting, reminiscent of early Britten, we had heard a couple of weeks before. (I must say I find it immensely cheering to learn that people are still writing *real* church music—as opposed to a couple of Mass settings I've heard at other churches that are memorable, all right, in the way an airline commercial can be memorable, bringing to mind Amanda Chase's line, "Extraordinary how potent cheap music is.") Squarely in the middle chronologically, and Friday evening's centerpiece, was Haydn's splendid Lord Nelson Mass, which had been performed here at the church's founding, and at important celebrations in between. Nor, in the good Anglican hymn-singing tradition, was the congregation always passive listeners: eight hundred voices lifted in "Ye who own the faith of Jesus" or (for it was, after all, still Advent) Charles Wesley's "Lo! he comes, with clouds descending" do indeed make a joyful noise unto God.

Remember the old joke in which someone who didn't get to church one Sunday asks someone who did: "What did he preach about?"

"Sin."

"What did he say?"

"He's against it."

A similar *reductio* applied to the Friday evening sermon by the Bishop of Edinburgh might run: "Sins. . . . They can be forgiven." But like our own Fr. Wells and Fr. Carlson when they sound this same theme, Bishop Holloway was unambiguous about why this is so: not because everything is just nicer that way, nor, Heaven knows, because we deserve it; but because our Father loves us enough to have sent His Son into the world to die for our sake. Which does not, the Bishop reminded us on Sunday (as Fr. Carlson had done the previous Sunday), relieve us of the need to humbly repent our sins, and to strive toward a perfection we know we cannot reach on earth.

Certainly the cityscape we walk out into when we leave St. Mary's—with grungy, X-rated Times Square to the west and slick but sterile Sixth Avenue to the east—seems no nearer perfection than it was in the days when flophouses flanked the elevated train tracks on Sixth Avenue and the Le Bruns, Stanford White, Carrère & Hastings, and all the rest were building New York's landmarks. But as we approach the Third Millennium, some of us will be glad that among the competing versions of *lux et veritas* proclaimed in Midtown Manhattan we have this continuing witness. Hail St. Mary's. □

BOOKS IN BRIEF

Not Entitled: A Memoir, by Frank Kermode (Farrar, 263 pp., $23)

READING Mr. Kermode's retrospective on his eventful life, we are to believe that most of that life has been a pose, that his rich oeuvre of critical studies belie his having procured his advantages by pretense, by somehow convincing the deciding authorities at every major turn in his career that he was smarter than he really was. This humility is a curious stance for someone who has been one of the guiding lights for those earnest for literary vocations. Born in 1919 on the Isle of Man, Kermode rose from a laboring-class background, taking odd jobs like clerk and ship's purser, playing his part in World War II. While he treats his family with reverent affection, he reveals many disruptions, noting that "few are now disposed to underestimate the potential horrors of family life, but I . . . wish that my family had been more skillful at the game of hiding them from others." He landed eventually at Cambridge, "where a cauldron of unholy hates hissed all around me," with "learned authors who shuffle, cough ink, and read Calvin." Missing are discussions of his own weighty contributions to the literary profession; there is nary a word about his own books. But he does discuss his controversial days as literary editor of *Encounter* as well as his struggles over the English-literature curriculum at Cambridge. This beautifully written—even lovingly written—book is chock-full of colorful anecdotes and poignant reminiscences of family, friends, and colleagues that make a shortish memoir read like a picaresque novel. —TRACY LEE SIMMONS

A Thing of State, by Allen Drury (Scribner's, 383 pp., $24)

JUST as Ed McBain virtually created the "police procedural" thriller, so, 36 years ago, Allen Drury's *Advise and Consent* effectively defined another genre: the heavyweight "Washington insider" political melodrama. In both categories the original is still the best, but, while McBain has gone on from strength to strength, Drury never again achieved so much golden recognition. Yet he has lost none of his edge, as a storyteller or as a commentator. This latest novel reflects a darkening view of the twentieth-century world and Washington's role in it. A minor but brutal Arab dictator, equipped with a clandestine nuclear arsenal, threatens a neighboring state, which looks to America for help. How will a glib, adroit, essentially weak President handle the crisis? The interlocking dance of White House, Senate, and media, the slanting of news, the self-satisfaction of big hitters in the game of power, all are depicted with chilling realism. The explanatory dialogue may seem a little ponderous, but the glossy narrative has a page-turning grip, sharpened by one horrific moment of real danger and death in the dreadful Mideast. "Don't cant in favor of savages," thundered Dr. Johnson. Drury could never be charged with that politically correct vice. He minces no words about the UN, the puffed-up bullfrogs of the Third World, or the smug tribes

(Continues on page 52)

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MEMORANDUM

To: All *NR* Classified Advertisers
From: Tony Savage

In the spirit of this joyous season of giving and gratitude, I'd like to personally thank everyone who advertised in this section during the past year. The goods and services offered in these pages represent a grand diversity (although probably not *enough* diversity to satisfy the liberal PC crowd!), and I can only hope the transactions between willing seller and willing buyer were beneficial to both parties. It was a pleasure doing business with each of you, and we're glad you chose *NR* (the Right Choice, always, in all ways). I look forward to continuing our relationship in 1996, and hope you all have a wonderful holiday season and a healthy, happy, and prosperous New Year.

Oh yes, one more thing. Despite the glorious Republican Ascendancy in Congress this year, we still have one very large obstacle (two, if you count his wife!) to remove in our quest to become a true republic. I trust you T-shirt & Bumper Sticker entrepreneurs, and the other clever folks out there who create all those fun and mischievous products, are up to the task. Remember : November will be here before you know it, and Arkansas eagerly awaits the return of its former Governor!

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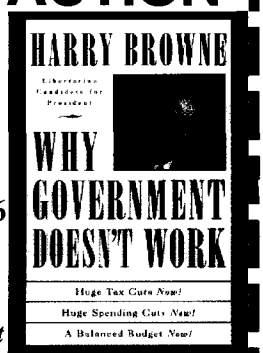

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BOOK BRIEFS

(Continued from page 50)

of Washington. Which is wonderfully refreshing. —ANTHONY LEJEUNE

English Papers: A Teaching Life, by William H. Pritchard (Graywolf, 197 pp., $22.95)

WILLIAM Pritchard talks more usefully about poetry than any other critic I have read in recent years. He always keeps the literary object in focus, showing how it works, where its strengths lie, how language embodies such strengths. He is surely a splendid teacher, an impression I have had from his rich body of work and which this memoir reinforces. It is a quietly powerful account of his career as a student at Amherst, a graduate student at Harvard, and a professor at Amherst. There is an explosion in this book, not altogether muffled by Pritchard's good manners and ironies. It consists of the cataclysm of 1968. This was an international revolution comparable to 1789, with eruptions in the U.S., England, France, Germany, Italy, and Latin America. It thundered through Professor Pritchard's world in central Massachusetts and in the English-teaching profession. All around him, he saw literature removed from a central focus, displaced by, even annihilated by, epistemological squabbles, Marxoid reinterpretation, psychobabble, race hysteria, and sexual perversion. Along with this, he perceptively recounts, went a general collapse of manners, including ordinary academic manners. He tells this familiar story with a strange forbearance. He sometimes seems resigned to being swept away by the deluge. But, though a time of locusts indeed is at hand, the best students are not going along with it, and it will be over sooner than most people in the academy think. —JEFFREY HART

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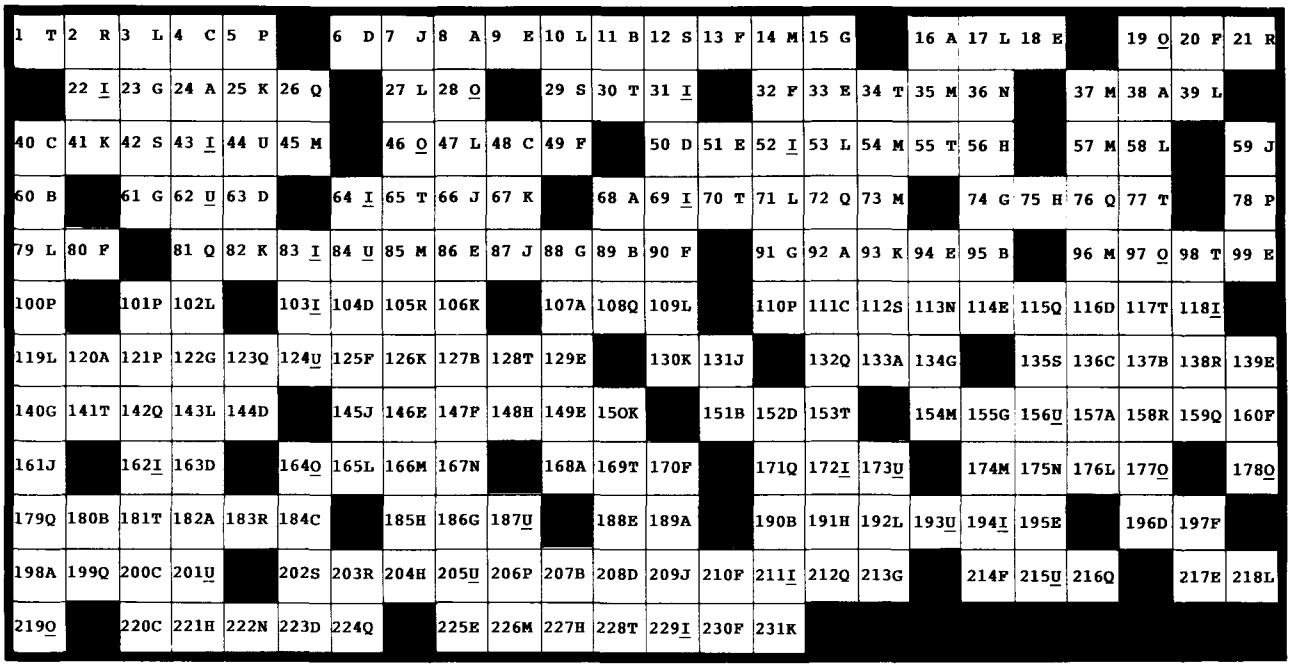
TRANS-O-GRAM / Siegfried R. Reiner



A. Material for consideration (3 words): 157 120 38 8 168 182 68 189 133 92 198 / 24 16 107

B. Backsliding: 180 95 190 11 137 207 89 127 60 151

C. Registrar: 184 136 4 220 48 40 200 111

D. German automotive giant (2 words): 50 152 6 208 144 223 63 196 163 104 116

E. Beat the rap (2 words): 149 18 99 217 225 51 86 146 129 139 188 / 94 195 9 33 114

F. Raise hackles (2 words): 147 13 32 214 160 80 49 197 125 210 20 / 90 170 230

G. Sublimity (or stupidity) defying expression: 140 186 134 91 61 155 122 23 15 88 74 / 213

H. Rome's foe in Punic wars: 148 191 227 221 75 185 204 56

I. Previous to Noah's time (3 words): 162 69 52 229 22 31 64 172 211 43 83 / 194 103 118

J. Natural attraction or likeness: 209 145 131 59 7 66 87 161

K. Diviner: 67 130 82 126 25 150 41 106 231 93

L. Roman rites defended in Henry VIII's treatise (3 words): 58 79 109 102 53 10 47 218 165 17 119 / 39 143 176 3 192 27 71

M. Affect enactments (2 words): 57 73 37 45 226 85 54 35 166 154 14 / 96 174

N. Out in front: 175 222 36 113 167

O. Hundred-headed serpent slain by Zeus: 19 219 178 97 28 177 164 46

P. A convert and companion of Paul: 78 101 121 110 206 100 5

Q. Student of gardening: 108 72 224 26 123 81 179 159 171 142 216 / 76 212 115 199 132

R. Fleeting: 21 105 158 183 138 2 203

S. Bavaria's mad monarch: 202 29 12 42 135 112

T. Venus's verse (2 words): 70 228 65 34 128 141 98 77 117 55 181 / 169 1 30 153

U. Beast befriended by Androcles (2 words): 156 62 44 124 187 173 201 84 205 215 193

Solution to last issue's Trans-O-Gram. *Isaiah: The Nativity*: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

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ON THE RIGHT / Wm. F. Buckley Jr.

Hate Kissinger

NEW YORK, DECEMBER 12

If you are easily conned, you will believe 1) that Nixon (in 1972) faced a re-election challenge that made it necessary to end the Vietnam War on whatever terms; 2) that Henry Kissinger, serving as National Security Advisor, wished to conclude the war primarily in order to win the Nobel Peace Prize; and 3) that oscillations by the North Vietnamese resulted in the betrayal of President Thieu of South Vietnam, the ascendancy of Henry Kissinger in public esteem, and an indefensible bombing by the United States of North Vietnam, done by Nixon *after* the election (he won 49 states), explainable only in terms of Nixonian grandiosity.

What's wrong with the above is that the terms Nixon gave the enemy, through Henry Kissinger, were identical to those that had been confidentially stipulated in May 1971, and publicized by Nixon in January 1972. They were that North Vietnam had to 1) cease further infiltration of the South, 2) return U.S. prisoners, and 3) acknowledge the de facto authority of the South Vietnamese government. In October 1992, Le Duc Tho capitulated. President Thieu asked for more concrete guarantees than Nixon thought he could give him; the North Vietnamese did not discontinue support for the infiltrators, and so Nixon launched the Christmas bombing. It was compared by his critics to Dresden and Hiroshima (in fact, casualties were minimal). Hanoi crumbled, the peace treaty was signed, and Nixon gave a written confidential guarantee to come to the aid of the South if Hanoi returned to aggression. What later happened was the emasculation of Nixon's authority owing to Watergate and to an antiwar fever that caused Congress to deny any further funds for military activity in Indochina.

The TNT "original" manages to create a two-hour horror story by the simple device of manipulating history to serve its ends. What *are* those ends?

Well, primarily to entertain, one guesses. In my lifetime I have not seen as much publicity given to any television episode. The TNT Original was scheduled to play six times in the ensuing ten days. The conventional explanation is that TNT seeks money, to come in from a hypnotized public. If Oliver Stone could do to the assassination of John F. Kennedy what he did and make money out of it and cause half the American people to believe that JFK's murder was covered up by the FBI, the President, the CIA, and the courts—why not play with the proposition that Nixon was an incompetent in foreign affairs, concerned only with his re-election, and that Kissinger was a feckless and disloyal courtier concerned only with his own advancement?

Now if you have not seen it, brace yourself. Nixon is in only one scene spotted without a glass of whisky in his hand. The Oval Office, as a commentator for the *New York Times* observed, is made to appear like one continuous cocktail party. Nixon feverishly dislikes and distrusts his National Security Advisor, whom he refers to as his "Jewboy." (Why did he promote him to Secretary of State a year later?) The "Jewboy" is seen conspiring against Nixon, bullying his staff, and scheming to betray Saigon. The actors do perfectly well the job assigned to them, which is to say that Nixon is made more or less to look and sound like Nixon, and Kissinger like Kissinger. The problem is: No one who has had any experience of Kissinger could validate the portrait given. And, as a matter of fact, loony though Richard Nixon was capable of being, even he is not recognizable to anyone of balanced judgment.

What hurts isn't really the scrambling of political history: the TNT folk can't drown out what really happened (and what they know really happened). What offends is the defamatory gluttony of the producers.

What can be the motive for portraying Henry Kissinger as a Rasputin loose in the White House? The ready answer is that the hobgoblinization of historical figures is a great theatrical draw. But the enormity of the TNT travesty suggests a banked hostility not readily explained. This show is for the most part too boring to attract the kind of attention given to Oswald shooting, or not shooting, JFK. But it pulsates with personal hostility.

Is there no defense against mutational mischaracterizations of living individuals, portrayed in fictitious situations, words stuck in their mouths to suit the ideological twitches of the producer?

There is no weapon against the abuse of history, or of the First Amendment. But it helps to ventilate the contempt it gives rise to, should give rise to. □

"I'd better be getting home—my negatives are up again."

The Flat Tax Parade

NEW YORK, DECEMBER 1

Not as much attention has been paid to the political emergence of the flat-tax proposal for reform as is warranted by the sudden resurrection of the beautiful, bewitching lady, asleep so many years. George McGovern, at a recent discussion of the question, approached it by saying, Yes, there is a Flat Tax constituency in America, just as there is a Flat Earth constituency. But that levity didn't quite go over with the 1,200 students assembled at the forum, and lo! it transpired that a poll had revealed that 35 per cent of them were in favor of a flat tax, 26 per cent opposed, and 39 per cent undecided. Those figures must have reminded George McGovern of the electoral count on the morning of November 8, 1972, when he found that his own constituency was the District of Columbia and Massachusetts.

To be sure, the audience was not made up of Ivy League trendies; Texas Christian University in Ft. Worth is a mere 120 years old. But the students were listening to a body of thought about tax reform that is the stuff of a bill introduced into the House of Representatives by the majority leader, who is—a congressman from Texas and a PhD. The symbolism was positively radioactive, because sharp eyes could see way in the back, onstage, familiar features. They were those of Jim Wright, who was Speaker of the House up until the current Speaker of the House so to speak chased him out of Washington with wet towels. It was Jim Wright who, on the *Today* Show, explained a particular economy then favored by President Reagan by saying to his host, "Don't you unnerstand, Bryant, President Reagan *hates* old people." Those who analyze a projected economy with language of that kind have no difficulty in backing the progressive income tax without any limit.

Or is there a limit? Lester Thurow, the left-liberal economist, was asked what

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were the philosophical objections to a tax as high as 100 per cent. Mr. Thurow accepted the challenge, and raised the challenger ten times. Under certain circumstances, he said, he would not object to a 1,000 per cent tax. How exactly to write such a tax law isn't obvious, but of course it could be done. In Montana, if you are of a certain age with a certain income, the incremental dollar can cost you one dollar and ten cents in taxation.

But what is of course interesting is the fresh revelation of the modern American liberals' emancipation from any sense of restraint where the tax code is concerned. Many years ago in his masterwork *The Constitution of Liberty*, F. A. Hayek designated redistribution by progressive taxation as "the chief source of irresponsibility of democratic action and the crucial issue on which the whole character of future society will depend." The only restraint against discriminatory taxation is the rule of law: If a law does it to A, it must also do it to B. They call that equal protection of the law, and it is written in the Fourteenth Amendment.

Nobody thinks the current tax code is any good; there are something like five billion hours spent in preparing tax forms, costing $50 billion for professional aid and the expenditure of an estimated $190 billion in tax-evasive action; But what is singular about this season is that the reforms being advanced are genuine, root-canal surgery. Dick Armey is not to be confused with the Libertarian candidate for President. Candidate Malcolm Forbes Jr. prompted *Fortune* magazine, so desperate to hang in there with its traditional liberalism, to call him "stupid" for advocating among other things a flat tax. Sen. Richard Lugar, running however forlornly for President as the mature and seasoned legislator, wants to jettison the IRS in favor of one consumption tax, period. Nobody begins to suppose that President Phil Gramm would veto a flat tax. It is fair to say that Columbus has sighted flat-tax land.

An interesting feature of the forum was the presence on the side of the flat-taxers of Jerry Brown, former governor of California, sometime candidate for the Democratic nomination for President. His arguments in favor of a flat tax were a little anfractuous (he believes the loopholes built into the progressive tax invite a corruption that can't be eliminated within a progressive structure), but he is, after all, the uncrowned king of the Woodstock Generation, and it is something of a spectacle to view him, dressed in his gypsy L. L. Bean outfit together with cowboy boots, tell off such as George McGovern and Bob Kuttner and Lester Thurow, votaries of the old and ailing icons, on the subject of progressive taxation. □

The Pot War In England

NEW YORK, DECEMBER 8

A friend abroad writes to ask whether the U.S. press has picked up on the November 11 editorial in *The Lancet* entitled "Deglamorising cannabis." The answer is: No, not as far as I am aware. And indeed no-news here is very strange news because *The Lancet* is the pre-eminent medical publication in Britain, something like the *New England Journal of Medicine*. And the extraordinary last line of the editorial reads, "Cannabis per se is not a hazard to society but driving it further underground may well be."

Inquiry into the story reveals that a Labour MP, Clare Short, proposed in the House of Commons recently that pot be legalized. As would have been the case if she had made the same proposal in Congress, Miss Short was all but run out of town.

But one has to suppose that some of the data she cited seeped through to the British consciousness. Begin with the poll in Glasgow. It documents a quite astonishing story, namely that one-half of all students between the ages of 14 and 25 admit to smoking pot "every day." Miss Short then went on to cite the experience of cannabis use in the Netherlands and in doing so bumped into another story.

It is this, that for twenty years the authorities in Amsterdam have simply ignored the use of pot, which is regularly sold in four thousand coffee shops in amounts up to 30 grams per customer. Technically, the use of the drug, let alone the sale of it, is illegal, and during its most recent campaign the governing party pledged to rectify this hypocrisy and was all set to do that when it was reminded by its neighbors of something called the Schengen agreement, which introduced the border-free zone between the Netherlands, France, Germany, Spain, Luxembourg, and Belgium. France threatened to annul the agreement because cannabis was flowing merrily into a country in which no drug is permitted to compete with alcohol. The Dutch have said that they must therefore crack down on pot, which would mean closing half the coffee houses, not a popular idea.

But *The Lancet*, reviewing the controversy kicked up by Miss Short, asks the Home Office to consider the implications of the rise in marijuana use in Great Britain. Notwithstanding its laws, consumption of pot has doubled in ten years. And *The Lancet* goes on, "Perhaps the politicians' real fear was that freedom to use soft drugs would automatically progress to increased use of substances such as cocaine and heroin. If so, they must have overlooked the recent Dutch government review which pointed out that decriminalization of possession of soft drugs had not led to a rise in the use of hard drugs."

Even so, the government struggles on. Last year Home Secretary Michael Howard increased the maximum fine for possession of the drug from $750 to $3,750, which is rough stuff but not, of course, to be compared with going to jail for a year or ten, as we do things here. There it "depends where you get caught," writes drug-reformer Mike Goodman. "There are parts of Wales and various rural areas where you'll certainly go to court for possessing cannabis and get a fairly stiff fine. In other areas, such as London, you'd be unlikely even to get a caution." In London, what you usually get is "informal disposal"—which means the police throw the confiscated drugs down the drain.

The evidence pours in. Another Home Office survey, this time of 25-year-olds, reveals that eight out of ten men and women have taken illegal drugs and that the biggest consumers were not schoolchildren but young white males from the professional and middle classes. At the other end of the empire we read that a businessman in Vancouver is quite openly engaged in distributing cannabis seeds all over the world, is paying his taxes, and the government of British Columbia is perfectly happy to accept the wages of sin, keeping his tax money and ignoring his illegal activity. "If the drug ever does become legal in Britain," writes a correspondent of *The Herald* (Glasgow), "it will be because of the sheer weight of such statistics, which indicate a threefold increase in the use of pot since 1989."

What is striking isn't so much the difference between what is legal and what people do, as the quite calm acceptance by the medical community of the relative harmlessness of cannabis, though the point is regularly made that if the weed were legalized, its quality could be superintended. And attention continues, however gradually, to focus on the paradox. Although "no exact figures are available," says the dispatch from *The Herald*, "it is known the Government is spending about twice as much on policing and prosecuting drug offenders as it does on education, prevention, and rehabilitation." That strikes some people, including your servant, as dumb. □

(Universal Press Syndicate)

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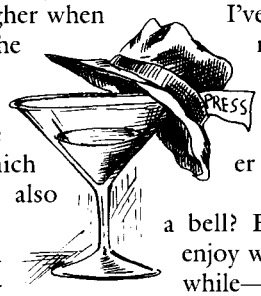
THE GIMLET EYE

JOE BOB BRIGGS

HAVE you seen these "Choose to Dee-Fuse" commercials? They have a bunch of gangsta rappas hangin out in The Hood. One of em gets shoved, or dissed, and two guys double up their fists—and then a celebrity walks into the picture and says, "Violence is not cool. Choose to deefuse." And then the guy who's mad turns and walks away. (By the way, the Believability Factor is a *lot* higher when the celebrity who walks into the picture is Patrick Ewing, as opposed to say, Rudy Giuliani. Rudy looks like he limoed into The Hood, which only gets you points if you also wear a purple fedora.)



Anyhow, want I wanna know is: Who are these commercials directed at?

Are there actually gang members in South Central El Lay or East St. Louis who will see this stuff and go, "You know what? I *choose* to avoid blowin the head off that dude who owes me drug money." Does this really happen?

Are there pimps who go, "I want my *money*," and start to slap the hooker around, but then think, "Naaawww. That guy on TV said I shouldn't do this. I tell you what, honey, we'll work out a time-payment plan."

I mean, aren't the only people who would take this seriously the people who *already don't wanna fight?*

In fact, these commercials could get you beat up *worse*. What if you're cowering in an alley, three big goons surroundin you, gettin shook down for some bookie money or something, and you say, "Don't hit me! Choose to deefuse! Choose to deefuse!"

I'm not sayin it wouldn't be *entertaining*, but I think what's likely to happen is that they're gonna pound the fuzz off your neck.

Whatever Do-Gooders came up with this idea, my advice to em would be, "Limit that topic!" It's like there were a bunch of librarians sittin around a table somewhere, and one of em said, "Well, we could do a public-service campaign about drugs," and the next one said, "No, let's do one about teenage pregnancy," and a third one said, "What about racism and hatred and World War . . ." And so the Head Librarian of the World says, "You know what the problem is? *Violence*. Let's do a TV commercial that *ends violence*."

I've been beat up a few times in my sorry little life, and I have to say, it's *not* always a good idea to deefuse. Sometimes being a deefuser can get you beat up *more*.

Does the word "bully" ring a bell? Bullies *love* deefusers. They enjoy watchin em run away. After a while—after it gets a little old—you have to say, "Today, I'm fusing." And then, even if the guy *still* beats the bejabbers out of you, because he's bigger, or meaner, or just better at fightin, you might still feel a little better about yourself.

Now, I'm not saying we shouldn't be tryin to come up with ideas that'll make people safer in the ghetto. But I don't think bromides on TV are gonna do the trick.

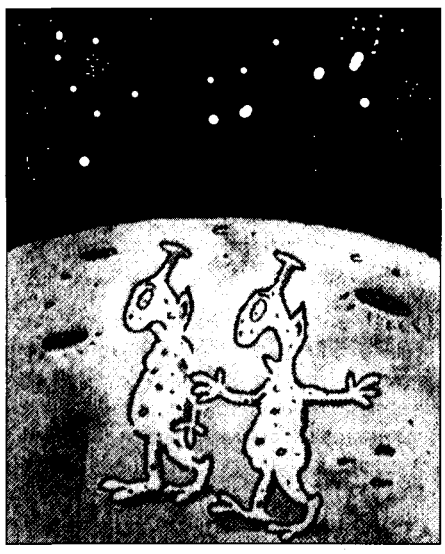
Actually, the only government-sponsored idea that's worked lately was the "Toys for Guns" program somebody came up with two Christmases ago. Evidently they put up a sign in the ghetto, tellin people to bring in a gun, give it to the police, and in return the police would give em a toy.

How could this possibly work?

I mean, they say it *did* work, but *how* does it work?

"I have here an AK-47, and I would like to get me one of them Barbie Dream Houses and a Big Wheel."

I mean, what kinda guy thinks, "Gee whiz, what should I do tonight? Wellllll, I guess I could take this .357 magnum and hold up a Korean grocery store . . . *I know*, I'll trade it in for a set of Army men. We can set em up on a sand pile, and I'll get down to the ground and squint at em through one eye, and it'll look like a *whole* big Army that's all my own, and then I'll knock em down with my hand and go, 'Kaplooey.' "



Matt-Rothco

"Xyzzzzpp mzzpp booo giippp Charles and Diana zzyx."

THIS thing started in the Washington Heights neighborhood of New York City, which is full of Dominican drug dealers. (Maybe that's why it worked. Those drug guys sometimes have *hundreds* of weapons in the back room. By now they probably have enormous Lionel train sets that look just like the ones at FAO Schwarz, with Swiss tunnels and drawbridges and roundhouses.)

But just a year earlier, they tried a program that handed out *cash* for guns, and that didn't work. The guys didn't want cash. They wanted *toys*.

"Hey, can I have that shotgun? I wanna take it down to the police station because I've been wantin one of them electric football sets where all the little plastic men run around in circles when you turn it on."

In fact, what if people start *stealin* the guns so they can get Game Boys? What if families start fightin over which family member gets to carry the rifle downtown and collect the Betsy Wetsy?

In some cases people were turnin in guns worth at least fifty bucks for a toy that costs ten. The New York cops were dealing *wampum* here, with the assistance of Toys R Us.

This is giving me a whole new insight into America. I'm not sure what the insight *is* yet, but give me a little time. I think it might be better, in the meantime, if we used somebody like, say, Big Bird to do the public-service announcements. What these guys really need is to learn to *count*. □

Mr. Briggs is a syndicated columnist from Grapevine, Texas.

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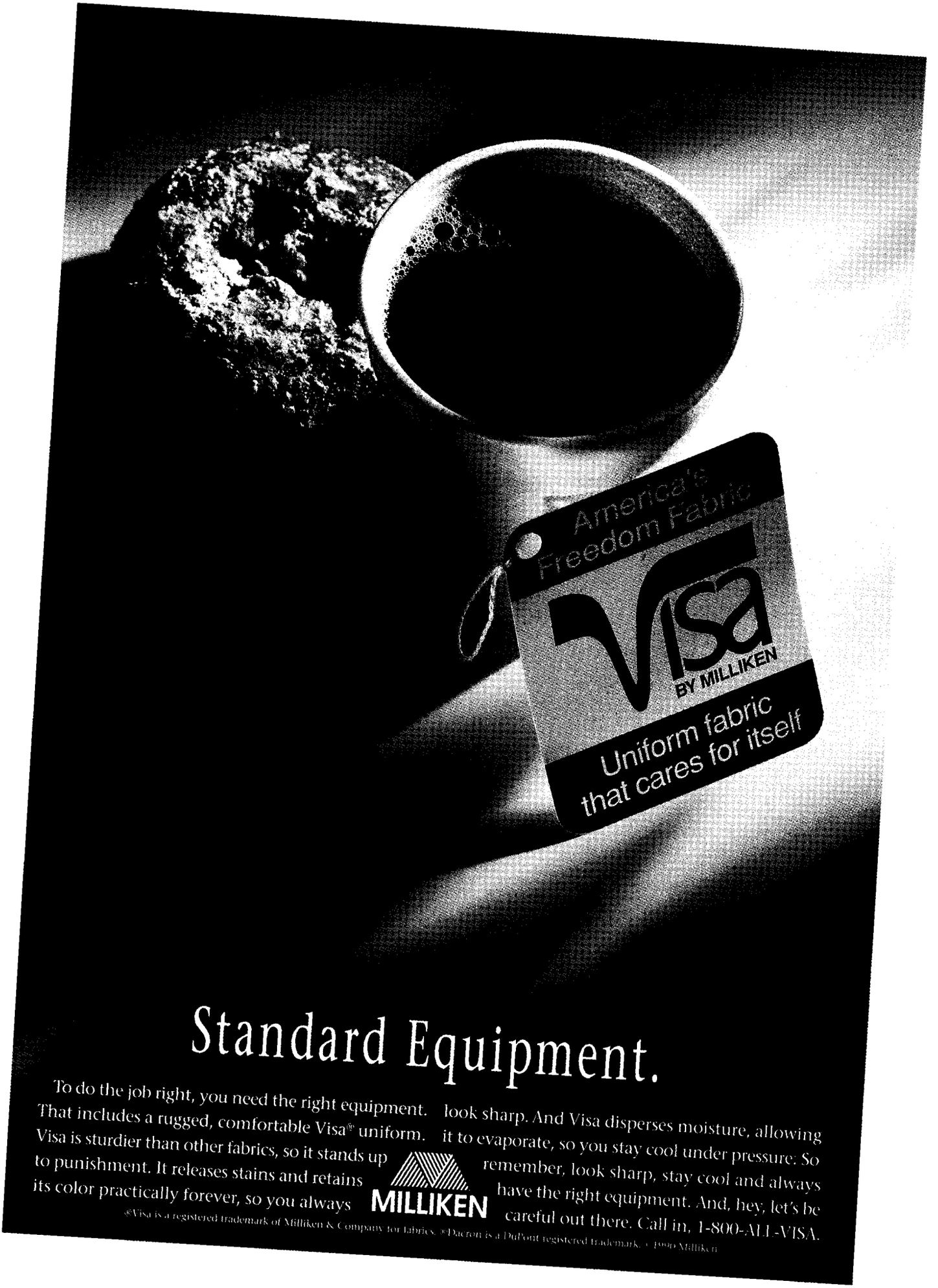

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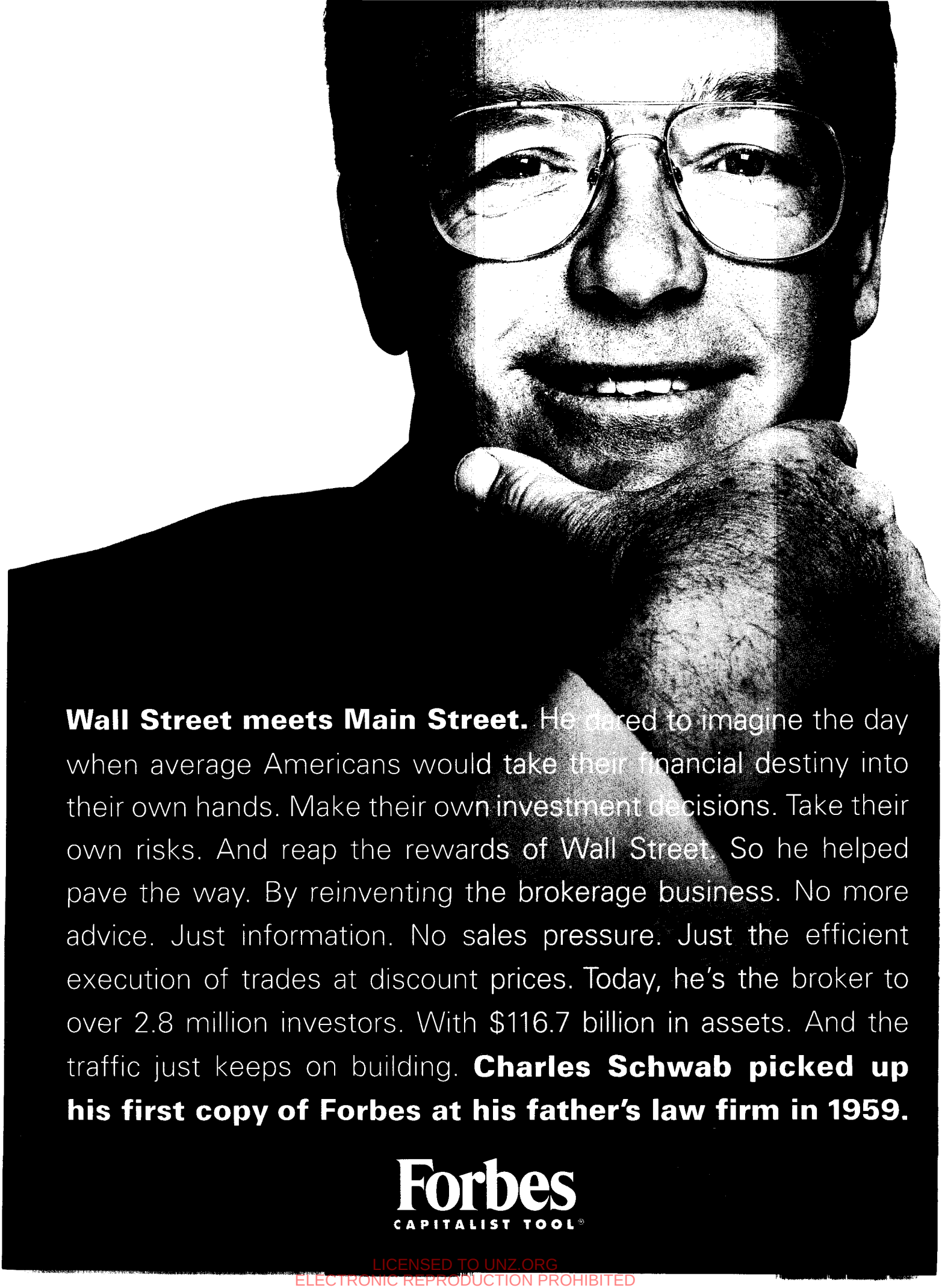

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